V, P. 178
226 a 3
2

THE HISTORICAL SENSE OF THE MOSAIC ACCOUNT OF THE FALL,

Proved and Vindicated.

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We have not followed cunningly deviſed fables.
2 Pet. i. 16.

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THE

PREFACE.

THE *author offers no apology for the following ſheets. If they ſhould, in any meaſure, contribute to eſtabliſh the great truth, in defence of which, they were ſometime ago written, they are neither too late in their appearance, unſeaſonable, nor ſuperfluous. If they contribute nothing to this end, if they throw no light on the ſubject, they are impertinent and inſignificant, and ought not to have appeared at all: and, indeed, the*

world had ſcarce been troubled with them, if ſome perſons, whoſe judgment he reveres, had not thought them in ſome degree worth ſubmitting to the conſideration of the publick.

E R R A T A.

Page 37. line 12. after *Here*, add, *is*. Ib. l. 22. dele fig. 2. p. 38. l. 20. *As it appears*, &c. begins the 2d infer. and a new parag. and ought to be marked fig. 2. p. 105. l. 21. dele *of itſelf, and*.

THE

THE HISTORICAL SENSE OF THE MOSAIC Account *of the* FALL *proved and vindicated.*

IN the controverſy lately ariſen about the ſenſe in which the account of the fall of man given by *Moſes* is to be underſtood, the previous queſtion, as I apprehend, is of what importance this matter is to revealed religion? If (as one party would fain perſuade us, and inſinuate that it is allowed by the other) 'the literal and 'allegorical interpretation of the account 'of the fall are of equal force and merit, 'with reſpect to their uſe or application to 'Chriſtianity,' (*Exam. of Biſhop of* Lond. *Diſc. p.* 137.) I do not ſee to what end ſo much learned pains has been beſtowed on one ſide, and ſo much aſſiduity to unravel it all on the other, or why the world ſhould be

troubled with a diſpute, that is in itſelf of no conſequence, and concerning which every one might as well be ſuffered to abound in his own ſenſe.

BUT is this really the caſe? It may be juſtly obſerved with regard to the importance of the hiſtorical ſenſe—that the whole book of *Geneſis* is hiſtorical. It contains a hiſtory, and the only hiſtory we have that deſerves the name, of the firſt ages of the world, from its creation till the death of *Joſeph*, including a period of 2369 years, whereof 1757 * are taken up with the general hiſtory of mankind, containing tranſactions and revolutions in the utmoſt degree important and intereſting to the human race——the creation of the univerſe, and of this lower earth—the formation of man and other animals—their deſtruction by the univerſal deluge—the ſucceeding reſtoration, increaſe, and diſperſion of mankind, and the ſettlement of the principal nations and families into which the earth was then divided. And tho' what follows contains only the hiſtory of one family, yet it

* To the birth of *Peleg*, when the families of the earth are ſuppoſed to have been divided.

it is ſuch a one as was deſigned for great matters, and carried on the great ends of God's providence in the government of the world; and even this particular hiſtory is intermixed with that of other ſtates and people.'

IT is a hiſtory, the authenticity of which is not as yet directly diſputed; and is alſo confeſſed to be ſuch, as if deſtroyed, the loſs could never be made up by any other. To this purpoſe it has been not unjuſtly remarked, whether ſeriouſly or not, be that to the remarker himſelf, that only he who was the author of it, or ſome other under divine direction, could be qualified for writing ſuch a hiſtory. 'If this ſtory, ſays 'he, had been told by any one but *Moſes*, 'we ſhould conclude that no writer could 'be ſo ſufficiently informed of it, as to be 'able to give an hiſtorical narration of it, 'nor could have authority enough to make 'it paſs for ſuch with any judicious reader.' p. 130.

Now, if any part of this hiſtory be deſtroyed, it is not only a loſs of ſo much hiſtorical information as it contains, but it

maims and diſcredits the reſt likewiſe. If the three firſt chapters of *Geneſis* are only allegory or fable, we know nothing of the creation, or formation of man, nothing of his firſt and beſt, or of his ſubſequent fallen eſtate. The hiſtory begins abruptly with the birth of *Cain*, if even that will be allowed to be hiſtory. For, if *Adam* and *Eve* are not real perſons, it will be a difficult matter to realize their ſon, or any of their ſuppoſed deſcendants *. The allegory therefore being carried thus far, I do not ſee why it may not, by the aſſiſtance of a good fancy be helped forward——and if it took with regard to one part, I ſhould not wonder to ſee the whole book of *Geneſis* in a little time treated in the ſame manner; and the humour, might, perhaps, be carried through all other hiſtories both ſacred and profane. And indeed ſome pretty bold attempts have been made of late to deſtroy the faith of all human teſtimony, as the performances

* Tho' it is not clear from the *Exam. of the Biſhop of* Lond. *Diſcourſes* that the author meant *Adam* and *Eve* to be mere allegorical perſons, yet the following paſſage out of his letter to Dr *Waterland*, p. 21, leaves no room to doubt of it.——'By *Adam* we are to underſtand *reaſon*, or the *mind* 'of man; by *Eve*, the *fleſh*, or *outward ſenſes*; by the 'Serpent, *luſt* or *pleaſure*.'

formances of father *Hardouin*, and the author of the free enquiry will diſcover.

IT is alleged indeed that the *matter* of the ſtory of the paradiſiacal ſtate and fall is abſolutely inconſiſtent with the character of an hiſtorical relation—But that is the point in queſtion, and if this charge can be removed, the hiſtory ſtands unſhaken. There are difficulties in the other parts of this hiſtory, and in all hiſtories, which it may not be eaſy to ſolve; muſt this therefore alter the nature of the whole, muſt hiſtory ceaſe to be hiſtory, becauſe we cannot account for every thing in it?

THIS is certain, that it is not conſiſtent with the *form* of any hiſtorical relation to introduce it with a fable, and connect real hiſtory with it ſo imperceptibly, that there is not the leaſt notice given where the fable ends, and the hiſtory begins. Immediately ſubjoined to the account of our firſt parents' expulſion out of Paradiſe are theſe words; *And* Adam *knew* Eve *his wife, and ſhe conceived and bare* Cain, *and ſaid, I have gotten a man from the Lord.* Is not this a con-

tinuation of the ſtory? And muſt it not be all of the ſame nature, whatever that be? Or is it poſſible to conceive that the hiſtorian meant to be underſtood to write fable in one paragraph, and real hiſtory in the next, without giving the leaſt intimation of the tranſition, or the leaſt room for any ſuſpicion of it? So far from it, the hiſtorical ſenſe has been, without ſcruple, received till of late, as well by the more *knowing and liberal*, as the *ſimpler ſort* of Chriſtians; and therefore as it is the moſt obvious, ſo it ſeems to be the moſt natural upon the whole, notwithſtanding ſome difficulties that may attend it. But if under ſuch a pretence, antient hiſtory is to be mutilated and curtailed, to humour men's caprice and prejudices, there will be no ſuch thing as true hiſtory left. How different is our conduct from that of the antient heathens in this reſpect! They traced up hiſtory as far as they could go towards the ſource of it, which was indeed but a little way; and all that was beyond the ken of their reſearches they were obliged to reckon among the dark and fabulous ages: We, having obtained the light of an infallible guide to diſcover what they wanted, are now for rejecting

jecting it, and wilfully endeavour to reduce the world to its priſtine ſtate of barbariſm and ignorance in this reſpect. And theſe are the laudable labours of the more *liberal* and *knowing* among us.

I HAVE hitherto conſidered what effect the allegorical interpretation of this account will have in the view of civil hiſtory only. But if we regard it farther as ſacred hiſtory—as a part of that book that contains the whole revealed will of God——as the opening and introduction of this revelation; the ſenſe of it riſes proportionably in its importance, and becomes ſo much the more neceſſary to be aſcertained. To this purpoſe it ſhould be conſidered, that there is a manifeſt connection between the ſeveral parts of ſcripture, from firſt to laſt——that it begins with the loſs of the paradiſiacal ſtate, and ends with the reſtoration of it—that the mention of the tree of life in *Geneſis*, and the tree of life again in the *Revelations*, was not thrown out caſually, and at random, by each of the ſacred writers, but that there is a viſible correſpondence between them—that we are hence to look for a ſe-

ries of prophecies, events, doctrines, &c. all carrying the ſame aſpect, and tending to the ſame point——and that we are not diſappointed in our reſearches———In a word, that the whole ſcheme of our redemption is founded on the fall, and began to operate immediately upon it; and that all the doctrines relative thereto, even in a manner the whole body of chriſtian theology, and the very ſpirit and eſſence, the end and deſign of Chriſtianity, have their foundation in this event; and that upon every ſcheme of it that deſerves the name of Chriſtian.

Now, not to inſiſt on the improbability of our being left without any hiſtory of our original ſtate, and of God's firſt covenants with man; let it only be conſidered whether an allegory, parable, apologue, or moral fable, can be a ſufficient foundation for ſuch a ſuperſtructure as the above to be raiſed on it.

A PARABLE is defined to be 'a mere 'fiction, but ſuch as muſt be probable, at 'leaſt poſſible,' which this is boldly pronounced not to be. 'By an allegory a different

'ferent ſenſe is conveyed from what is ſig-
'nified by words.' 'And the peculiar cha-
'racter of an apologue or moral fable,'
which this is at laſt determined to be, 'is
'to relate things and events, impoſſible in
'their nature;' which is ſaid to be evident-
ly the caſe of the narrative in queſtion.
p. 124.

AND if this really be the caſe, if this be a relation of things and events impoſſible in their nature, it cannot be a foundation for any thing in nature, becauſe it has not any foundation in it itſelf. We are, notwithſtanding, taught that this doctrine may be inferred from it—'That the world was cre-
'ated by God, and that man was happy in
'it as long as he continued innocent, but
'forfeited his happineſs, and became wretch-
'ed and miſerable, as ſoon as he became a
'wilful and habitual ſinner.'

THIS we are told is the whole that we can rationally collect from the Moſaic account of the fall. Be it ſo; it cannot then ſurely be denied that this ſame doctrine may as well be inferred from the hiſtorical account as from the allegorical interpretation; with

with this advantage beſides, that a fact which is related with all its circumſtances—wherein is ſpecified what the particular tranſgreſſion was—by what means, and by whoſe ſuggeſtions the parties came to offend—what the conſequence and puniſhment of the offence was—the appearance of their judge—the ſentence pronounced on them, and other particulars relating to this matter: A fact, I ſay, thus circumſtantially related, muſt be a more ſolid and ſubſtantial baſis for any doctrine, and convey a clearer idea of it, and, in this caſe, of the grounds and reaſons of the divine conduct with regard to it, and of that ſyſtem of religion which was revealed, and gradually introduced in conſequence of it; than a *fanciful* tale, grounded on the general ſuppoſition that man had made himſelf wretched by ſinning, but from which we know not how, or when, or to what degree he became ſo, nor eſpecially what relief he might hope to have from this wretched condition; for this, and every thing elſe relating to this intereſting affair, it leaves us quite in the dark about.

Add to this, that the hiſtorical ſenſe not only

only better preſerves the connection and analogy between this and the other parts of ſcripture, which, it is to be hoped, will be allowed to be ſomething more than fable; but if admitted, it moreover in itſelf contains a noble prophecy, the foundation of all the religious hopes of the firſt parents of the world, and of all future prophecies relating to man's redemption, which are all loſt by the allegorical interpretation.

BUT if the hiſtorical ſenſe were given up, and the allegorical, or fabulous, received inſtead of it, it is eaſy to foreſee what uſe would be made of it, and how it would be entertained by thoſe very people who are moſt deſirous now of ſetting it up. We may well conceive that this *eaſtern tale* would be made a greater, and indeed more proper ſubject of ridicule then, than the hiſtorical account is now; when it is viſible enough that a man who was not quite deſtitute of art, had much ado to keep his countenance, and could ſcarce treat it in a ſerious manner, even at the time that he was labouring to eſtabliſh it. The ſuppoſed grounds of it would then be ſoon called in queſtion, and the grave moral would be but laughed at. In-

ſtead

ſtead of being told 'that *we could not avoid* '*ſeeing* the intention of the writer in *imagin*-'*ing* man to be formed out of the duſt of 'the earth, *&c.*' we ſhould not be allowed to ſee any thing at all in it. Every circumſtance would be diſputed, and explained away. It would be aſked, and indeed juſtly, on what grounds the ſerpent is ſuppoſed to be the emblem of luſt? For has he more of it than other animals? Or is his ſenſuality inferred from his ſubtilty? As the curſe on the ſerpent is ſaid to carry nothing more in it than a fanciful ſolution of the cauſe and origin of the preſent odious nature of that beaſt, p. 135, may not the ſame thing be ſaid as juſtly of the curſe on the earth, and the ſentences on the man and woman? That theſe are all, not juſt or true, but no more than *fanciful ſolutions* of their preſent natures.

It might be farther aſked, how the ſerpent comes to be ſingled out from the reſt of the creation, animate, and inanimate, brute, and rational, to have his nature explained to us? Is this the only creature which it was neceſſary or proper we ſhould know thus much of? Or would it not be

equally

equally, or more deſireable that we ſhould be informed of the natures of many other beaſts and reptiles? Admitting of the hiſtorical account we ſee a good reaſon for introducing him, but, according to the allegorical interpretation, a very whimſical one.

IN ſhort, whether the hiſtorical ſenſe of the fall be true or not, man muſt have fallen from his original ſtate, or I do not ſee how Chriſtianity can be true. It might poſſibly have ſtood without this particular account of the manner of man's diſobedience; but without the ſuppoſition of a lapſe of our nature in ſome manner or other, I conceive it cannot, becauſe the very end it is calculated for, is our recovery from ſuch lapſe. And we have ſeen in what a precarious ſtate the allegorical interpretation leaves it, though it be aſſerted to be adequate to every uſe which Chriſtianity can require from it; but this ſhould be proved, before it can be admitted as ſuch.

IT is acknowledged that all ſorts of Chriſtians, 'the more *knowing*, as well as 'the *ſimple*, agreed to make this *ſtory*, as 'it is called, however underſtood, the foun-

'dation

'dation of their common religion.' p. 138. It was therefore not unpolitickly judged that to make a *mere ſtory* of it, could that be done, would be the moſt effectual method to ſap the very foundation of Chriſtianity.

Of ſuch importance is the *hiſtorical* ſenſe! and its importance alone is the real ground of all the objections that have been raiſed againſt it, and not any ſuch abſurdity in it as is pretended.

But has not the authority of a great Prelate been produced for attributing *equal force and merit to the allegorical and literal interpretation of the fall, with reſpect to their uſe or application to Chriſtianity?* (p. 137). Sufficient care has been taken to let us know what Prelate is meant; but if he, or any other, how great ſoever his authority were, ſhould pronounce the *allegorical* ſenſe, in oppoſition to the *hiſtorical*, to be of equal merit, with regard to Chriſtianity, I ſhould beg leave to diſſent from him. But, groſsly miſrepreſented as he has been, he is not even repreſented to have ſaid this. The *allegorical* and *literal* ſenſes are thoſe which are here compared with each other, which makes

makes a wide difference in the caſe; tho' preſently afterwards the terms are changed, and the word *hiſtorically* is ſlipt in inſtead of *literally*, in order to confound both, and make them paſs for one and the ſame. The *literal* interpretation, in the ſenſe of that Prelate, is that which ſuppoſes 'a real ſerpent 'to have appeared under the management 'of the evil Being, and as his inſtrument 'in the temptation of *Eve*:' The allegorical is that which ſuppoſes 'the evil Being 'to have tranſacted the whole himſelf (un-'der what form or appearance, he pretends 'not to determine) and that the term *ſer-'pent* is uſed metaphorically, to denote im-'mediately this wicked Being, and as an 'emblem of him.' *Appendix p.* 10.

BOTH theſe interpretations of this circumſtance of the ſerpent are undoubtedly of equal merit, with regard to their uſe or application to Chriſtianity, as both of them are conſiſtent with, and indeed ſuppoſe an hiſtorical narration. 'Let any man try, ſays the Biſhop, 'what objections he can 'raiſe from one opinion, or from the other, 'againſt any known concluſion from *this 'hiſtory*. If he can raiſe none, it is evident

'this

'this point of difference does not affect any 'thing in which religion can be concern-'ed.' *ib.* This is his Lordſhip's ſenſe of the matter, as he has explained it himſelf, in what he has laſt publiſhed to the world on this ſubject. His examiner had his performance before him, and was, at this time, ſcrutinizing every part of it, with a more than critical ſeverity; and if he had wanted to have known his ſentiments, he could not fail of ſeeing what they were, with regard to the literal and allegorical interpretation of the ſerpent; for it does not appear that he dreamed of an allegorical interpretation of the account of the fall in general; at leaſt he does not ſeem to think ſuch an opinion worth his particular notice. But to know the Biſhop's ſenſe was not what he wanted, but to pervert it, and to make him give up the preference of the hiſtorical ſenſe in private converſation, in defence of which he has, as this writer obſerves, publickly beſtowed ſo much pains and application. And now what is it that he makes him ſay? Why that the *ſimpler ſort* of Chriſtians interpret this ſtory one way, and the *more knowing and liberal* another way, (hereby intimating as if there were in Chriſtianity

tianity ſomething of the ſame juggle as was in the heathen myſteries, viz. exoteric and eſoteric doctrines) but notwithſtanding that, both ſimple and liberal conſidered it, as the foundation of their common religion.

HENCE it appears, that it was this unhappy author himſelf who was guilty of the baſe art, of which he accuſed others. For having palm'd upon us *the hiſtorical interpretation* of the whole paſſage, inſtead of the *literal* ſenſe of one part of it, "*he contrived* "*to jumble the hiſtorical, literal, and allego-* "*rical interpretations of it together, till, by* "*the help of that confuſion, he ſhuffled his* "*own ſenſe* upon the biſhop." [*See Dr* M. *exam. p.* 139.]

HAVING ſhewn the importance of the hiſtorical ſenſe, I come now to offer ſome proofs of it from the ſcriptures, both of the Old and New Teſtament, which have not hitherto, to my knowledge, been conſidered, and which may ſerve as a ſupplement to thoſe that have been collected by a much abler hand.

THE firſt ſcripture proof that offers itſelf in favour of the hiſtorical ſenſe of the fall, is connected with it in the context; which though it has, I know not how, eſcaped hitherto unobſerved in that reſpect, does not therefore leſs deſerve our obſervation. For it will, if I miſtake not, upon examination appear that this important hiſtory, is very providentially ſecured by it on all ſides againſt the efforts of its enemies to deſtroy it; as *the Garden of Eden* was by the divine guard placed before it, *which turned every way to keep the way of the tree of life.*

GEN. ii. 9. We read that among other trees, which the *Lord God made to grow out of the ground* was the *tree of knowledge of good and evil*: and v. 16, 17. *that the Lord God commanded the man, ſaying, of every tree of the garden thou mayeſt freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil thou ſhalt not eat of it, for in the day that thou eateſt thereof thou ſhalt ſurely die.* From the name of this tree, the tempter took occaſion of expatiating upon its virtues to *Eve*, aſſuring her, that in *the day ſhe ſhould eat thereof, her eyes ſhould be opened, and they ſhould be as Gods,*

Gods, knowing good and evil. *Gen.* iii. 5. From this character of it, the woman ſaw that it was a *tree to be deſired to make one wiſe*, v. 6. And in conſequence of their eating, *the Eyes* of both the Man and Woman *were opened, and they knew that they were naked.* v. 7. *And the Lord God* thereupon *ſaid behold the Man is become as one of us to know good and evil.* v. 22.

From theſe ſeveral paſſages, which I have placed together in one view, it appears that the knowledge of good and evil was to be derived from the eating of this myſterious tree —that our firſt parents experienced this effect in reality, and from ſome of the expreſſions it appears farther, that this knowledge was conſiderable. But what the nature of it was, or in what particulars it conſiſted, the text is ſilent: this, if it is to be diſcovered at all, can be inferred only from the context, and the nature and circumſtances of their then preſent ſtate; whence, if it can be made out, it will not only evince the reality of this one part, but of the whole hiſtory.

Our firſt parents, in their former ſtate, could have no knowledge of evil, as there

was no evil ingredient in it, for the text is expreſs that *all was very good:* and it ſhould ſeem that they had no knowledge even of that good, ſince this was the fruit of the tree of knowledge. But that would be concluding too much. They could not have enjoyed the happineſs of the paradiſiacal ſtate, without being ſenſible of it; and their experience alone, muſt have made them, more or leſs, acquainted with *the things that were before them*, and with which they were daily converſant. They were likewiſe under a covenant with God, conſiſting of a privilege granted, a condition to be obſerved, and a ſanction to enforce it, in which they had been inſtructed. They could not therefore have paſſed this ſtate in total ignorance; and it will, perhaps, appear hereafter, that they were for their time and circumſtances enlightened in a more than ordinary manner. And yet the tree of knowledge, forbidden in this ſtate, ſeems to imply, that it was not a ſtate diſtinguiſhed for knowledge, but rather the contrary.

BUT there are different kinds, as well as degrees of knowledge. Before they taſted of the forbidden fruit, they knew nothing but

but what was purely good; from this was derived a ſort of * mixt knowledge, both of good and evil. The paradiſiacal life was not a ſtate of ignorance in itſelf, but that which ſucceeded might, notwithſtanding, in compariſon of it, be called a ſtate of knowledge; and it might more eſpecially be ſuch, wherein new ſcenes might open, and another kind of knowledge, of a quite different nature might ariſe, and be derived from the tree of knowledge.

Let us ſee, therefore, what light the context will afford into the nature of it. The only particular which it is expreſly ſaid they knew was their own nakedneſs. *Gen.* iii. 7. *And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked.* This was the immediate effect of their eating, which gives us to underſtand, that having loſt their *innocence*, they ſoon became ſenſible of the poverty and wretchedneſs of that condition, to which they had been reduced by their diſobedience, and of the turpitude concommitant to their nakedneſs, which, till then, was unknown to them. Tho' this be the

* This is *R. Menaſſeh*'s opinion. See *Baſn. Hiſt. Jew.* ſect. 4. chap. 12. p. 318.

only thing, which in expreſs terms it is ſaid they knew, yet it ſerves to lay open to us the nature of their knowledge in general, as the reſt of this branch of it may be ſuppoſed analogous. Accordingly we find that they ſoon obtain'd a conſiderable knowledge, of this kind, and became very early acquainted with evil. The tranſgreſſion itſelf gave them an immediate and practical knowledge of ſin, a knowledge, which, in all caſes, is the moſt ſure and infallible, though in this moſt fatal.

BOTH the ſentences of the unhappy pair informed them of a life of labour and ſorrow, pain and ſickneſs, and at length, of the final diſſolution of their nature by death; which information was ſoon confirmed by their own experience. In a word, they had an experimental knowledge, both of moral evil, and of all the natural evils of life, which latter were inflicted as the puniſhment of the former, and have ever ſince been experienced to be produced by it as an effect by its cauſe, and to follow it, as its natural and neceſſary conſequence.

THESE evils, it appears, they knew by their fall—theſe were all introduced into the world

world by it, and have more or leſs continued in it ever ſince—theſe include all the evils in nature, ſo that there were none of any other kind for them to know but theſe—and theſe it will be allowed were ſufficient.

HAVING ſhewn wherein their knowledge of evil conſiſted, I ſhall hereafter examine the extent and meaſure of it, and proceed now to enquire into the nature of that good which they had the knowledge of.

THE *Lord God ſaid*, after the fall, *behold the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil*, ſo that he undoubtedly had knowledge of the one as well as the other; but wherein this knowledge of good conſiſted, is the queſtion: for the reſolving of which, there is but little light to be had from the context.

SHALL we ſay with ſome that it was *good loſt* * by the fall, the good of paradiſe,

* As *Bonfrerius*, *Ainſworth*, and others of the critics: which expoſition is adopted by *Milton*, and expreſſed in theſe lines.

—— our eyes
Open'd we find indeed, and find we know
Both good and evil — good loſt, and evil got,
Bad fruit of knowledge, if this be to know.

and

and all the felicity of their firſt happy ſtate, of which they then acquired the knowledge? This is but a very low and imperfect ſenſe of the matter, amounting in reality to no more than the knowledge of evil; for what elſe can we call the loſs of good? and what more does a comparative knowledge in this reſpect amount to?

THEIR knowledge of good therefore was undoubtedly of good obtained, not loſt; otherwiſe it could not properly be called knowledge of good at all; as it convey'd not in itſelf ſo much as a poſitive idea of good, but was entirely of a privative nature.

IT muſt be ſomething more ſubſtantial that we are to enquire after, and that better anſwers the fullneſs and exuberance of ſcripture ſenſe. Their knowledge of evil we have ſeen was ſufficiently conſiderable, and it does not appear from the terms, but that of good was equal to it. And as they are joined both together, I ſhould hope it would be allowed me, that they are relative to each other as well as oppoſites, and put in contraſt with each other. As good and evil therefore are oppoſites in nature, and as the

evil

evil they knew was ſo univerſal as to comprehend every ſpecies of evil under it, the good by the rule of contraries muſt be ſo likewiſe, at leaſt it muſt be ſuch as would, according to the force of its *momentum*, counteract the evil; and indeed what *good* could any thing do *them*, but what relieved them under, or reſcued them from the *evil* they were obnoxious to. It is therefore but reaſonable to conclude that as the evil they knew was the evil of the fall, the good they knew was the remedy provided by God for it, theſe two kinds of knowledge being, as I ſaid, put in contraſt with each other. Indeed, if we conſider their condition at that time, nothing elſe could be *good* with regard to *them*; and if we revolve in our thoughts all the good that is in nature, and examine particularly every ſpecies of it, we ſhall be able to find none, but what in its nature is oppoſite to, and in effect a cure for its contrary evil; ſo that, if they knew good at all, it muſt be ſuch as was in ſome meaſure a remedy for the evil they knew. All moral good is oppoſed to moral evil, and natural good to natural evil; and, as contraries expel each other, wherever the one gains ground and prevails, the other muſt be proportionably

portionably weakened and give way. The authors likewiſe of both are at conſtant ſtriſe and variance with each other.

Now, as it is a conſtant maxim in the divine œconomy to bring good out of evil in leſſer inſtances, and particular caſes; we cannot ſuppoſe that the Almighty fail'd to do ſo in this greateſt, this general evil which included all others. And of this it is ſufficiently plain that he gave our firſt parents ſome proofs.

IN the ſentence on the ſerpent it is ſaid that the ſeed of the woman ſhould bruiſe his head. Here is implied ſome good or advantage made known to our firſt parents, ſince theſe words confeſſedly foretel, that the ſeed of the woman ſhould vanquiſh him who is here called the ſerpent; but how this is to be underſtood, is the queſtion. If it is to be interpreted only literally of a mere natural ſerpent, it would indeed be a proper revenge of the miſchief done them by that venomous creature of biting their heels, for the children of *Eve* now and then to tread upon them, and cruſh them under their feet, or otherwiſe deſtroy them. But this would be

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no remedy at all for the evil which the ſerpent brought on the woman and her ſeed, by ſeducing her to ſin, which was what they wanted.

But if this paſſage be underſtood in that much nobler ſenſe, in which it has been explained to the ſatisfaction of all reaſonable and unprejudiced perſons — that by the ſerpent is meant a malicious wicked ſpirit, who tempted our parent *Eve* under that diſguiſe — and that the ſentence on the ſerpent conveyed to our firſt parents a general hope, that they in their poſterity ſhould with ſome damage, not only triumph over this enemy of theirs, but likewiſe be delivered from the fall, and all the evils conſequent upon it — the knowledge of ſuch a bleſſing as this, though the whole fruit of it were not to be enjoyed immediately by themſelves, but by their poſterity, might very properly be call'd the knowledge of good. It was ſuch as comprehended under it every other — It was moſt beneficial and neceſſary to them under their preſent circumſtances, as it was exactly calculated for their caſe, and contained a remedy for every evil they laboured under. It was ſuch a ſubſtantial good, as would

would in due time, more than balance the evil of the fall; but no other good that can be conceived, would go near to equal it. Indeed there is no good in nature, but what is derived from this ſource, and may be reſolved into it.

THE diſtant proſpect of the woman's ſeed, bruiſing the ſerpent's head, muſt adminiſter comfort to them; and the promiſe of a victory muſt ſupport their hopes, and animate them with courage to continue the conteſt for it.

NOR were the Criminals themſelves without their ſhare in the fruits of the bleſſing. Their very puniſhment was in mercy inflicted on them. (*See Bp. of* Lond. *App. p.* 38.) That which their tranſgreſſion had been threatened with in the obvious ſenſe of it, was immediate death — *in the day that thou eateſt thereof thou ſhalt ſurely die.* But this puniſhment was exchanged for a life of ſorrow. And of this favour *Adam* muſt immediately have been ſenſible, not only from the nature of his own and his wife's ſentence, but from that of the ſerpent likewiſe; and he has accordingly left us, an expreſ-

expreſſion of his ſenſe of it in the name, which hereupon he gave his wife; which implied, that both he and ſhe were to have their lives continued to them, that ſhe might become the *mother of all living*, and give birth to a numerous offspring that were to iſſue out of their loins.

HAVING endeavoured to fix the nature of the good and evil known by our firſt parents, let us now proceed to examine the extent and meaſure of their knowledge of each. To this end let us take a review of the words. This is, by God himſelf, called the *tree of knowledge of good and evil*; and accordingly when our firſt parents had eaten of it, God himſelf again, ſays, *behold the man is become as one of us to know good and evil.* The words are undoubtedly to be underſtood in the ſame ſenſe in both places, and it betrays a very poor ſhift, to which learned men were reduced, to interpret them ſeriouſly in the former place, and ironically in the latter; a figure of ſpeech that does not ſeem to become the dignity of the divine nature on the occaſion.

NEITHER can it be well underſtood as a ſarcaſtical

ſarcaſtical alluſion to the tempter's promiſe, *Ye ſhall be as Gods, knowing*, &c. without its reflecting, in ſome meaſure, on God's own appointment and denomination of the *tree of knowledge*, &c. Nor, indeed, will the language bear this interpretation, the particle הִנֵּה, *ecce*, being always uſed in a ſerious manner, to raiſe the attention to ſomething of importance that is to follow. Thus *Schindler* particularly obſerves, with regard to the prophetical ſtyle, which equally holds of the ſcripture ſtyle in general; *Obſervandum prophetas hanc particulam uſurpare de rebus eximiis et certis dicturos, ut auditores reddant attentos.*

THE knowledge therefore of our firſt parents, after the fall, was undoubtedly real, and from the height of the compariſon, we may as juſtly conclude, that it was conſiderable likewiſe. The woman of *Tekoah* compares *David* for wiſdom to an *Angel of God, to diſcern good and bad.* 2. *Sam.* XIV. 17, 20. And it is ſaid of *Daniel*, that *in him was the ſpirit of the holy Gods, and that light, and underſtanding, and wiſdom, like the wiſdom of the Gods, was found in him. Dan.* V. 11. which is exactly parallel to the text before

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us. It is, indeed, a known rule in the ſacred language, to expreſs any thing great or ſuperlative in its kind, by the addition of one of the names of the Deity, but a direct compariſon with the Deity itſelf is much bolder and more ſuperlative ſtill, and cannot be equall'd for ſtrength in any language.

Hence therefore, with ſubmiſſion, I think the concluſion is unavoidable, that our firſt parents knowledge both of good and evil, was more extenſive than has been imagined. And as the good they knew, was in general the remedy provided by God for their fall, to make their knowledge hereof in any meaſure proportionable to the compariſon, I think it may without force be ſuppoſed to extend, if not farther, at leaſt to a general view of the great ſcheme of our redemption, through that perſon foretold and promiſed to them, under the character of the ſeed of the woman. Nothing leſs than this, I think, can come up to the height of the compariſon. This is that knowledge ſo wonderful and excellent in its nature, in reſpect of which St Paul *counted all things but loſs*, and *determined to know nothing elſe*, and which even the *angels deſired to look into* — This is

wiſdom

wiſdom ſo exalted, ſo heavenly and divine, that it well merits ſuch a *divine* diſtinction from every thing elſe that can be called wiſdom or knowledge. Our Saviour Chriſt himſelf informs us that *Abraham rejoiced to ſee his day*; why therefore might not the ſame favour be vouchſafed to *Adam*, who had no leſs need of it to ſupport his own religious hopes, and to qualify him to be a ſufficient inſtructor of his children — to lay a good foundation of religion for the uſe of the riſing generations, and to convey the ſame religious hopes to future ages?

TRADITION, like a ſtream, the farther it flows from its fountain and diffuſes itſelf, not only grows more corrupt, but it the more likewiſe waſtes its ſtrength, is diminiſh'd and exhauſted. As therefore the Religion of the firſt ages depended altogether on oral tradition, *Adam* muſt have had ſo much knowledge, at leaſt, as would have enabled him to deliver ſuch a ſyſtem of religion to poſterity, as ſhould be ſufficient to anſwer the purpoſes of it, and to ſuſtain the injuries it ſhould ſuffer in the ſucceſſive generations through which it was to paſs. And we find, in fact, notwithſtanding

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all the proviſions of providence, in this reſpect, it was in proceſs of time, and before many ages had paſt, totally corrupted, and in a manner deſtroyed.

IT remains that we examine the extent of our firſt parents knowledge of evil.

As it appears that their knowledge of both kinds muſt have been conſiderable, and we have no grounds to conclude that the one was leſs ſo than the other — it follows that they muſt have had a full and comprehenſive, and therefore a very melancholy view of the evil into which they had plunged themſelves, in its nature, effects, and conſequences. And moreover, as they had the knowledge of a Redeemer, the author of good imparted to them, it may with equal probability be inferred that the author of evil likewiſe was now diſcovered; ſo that they came to know it not only in its nature and conſequences, but in its cauſe and origin likewiſe; and were informed who it was that tempted them to tranſgreſs — that Being to whom it is more clearly attributed in *N. T. The devil and ſatan.* They therefore well underſtood that he was included

under the ſentence on the ſerpent — nay that it was principally directed to, and pronounced upon him. So extenſive was our firſt parents knowledge of evil as well as good! They knew what was to be known, both of the one and the other.* They knew THE GOOD and THE EVIL ONE. The words admit of this rendering, but I propoſe it only as what may be included in the ſenſe of them.

THE rabbinical writers utter many extravagances of the conſummate knowledge, and other extraordinary accompliſhments of *Adam*, and we hence ſee that their high notions of him were not altogether without foundation.

How long he was acquiring ſuch a fund of ſpiritual knowledge — whether he received it all at once by immediate inſpiration ſoon after his fall — or whether he had it,

* This is agreeable to the ſenſe of the LXX, who render the tree of knowledge ξύλον τῦ εἰδέναι γνωστον καλῦ κ) πονηρῦ. *Lignum ad ſciendum cognoſcibile boni et mali.*

as is moſt probable,* by ſucceſſive revelations, and gradual improvements, is of no importance to the preſent queſtion; but only whether he had it at all, in conſequence of having eaten of the tree of knowledge, which I perſwade myſelf has been made appear.

For it has been ſhewn that all the good and evil in nature were included, the one in the fall, and the other in its remedy, and that therefore if they had any additional knowledge, it muſt have been of theſe, as there were no other ſpecies either of good or evil for them to know.

* In favour of this ſenſe, it may be obſerved, that it is not ſaid — *The man is become like one of us*, then actually *knowing* good and evil, but the expreſſion is לדעת *to know*, i. e. he is now in a capacity of acquiring this knowledge, agreeably to an expreſſion of St *Paul*, exactly parallel to that before us. *Col.* iii. 10. in which he tells us that the new man is renewed εἰς ἐπίγνωσιν *unto* knowledge, after the image of him that created him *i. e.* unto the gradual attainment, not in the immediate poſſeſſion of it. Whence by the way appears the propriety of comparing man to the deity, in point of knowledge, as we here ſee that the divine image, in part, conſiſts therein. But if it be ſtill thought, that even in this ſenſe, too much knowledge is here aſcribed to *Adam* for his ſtate, though it be no more than the text ſeems to imply, the words may be underſtood in a greater latitude, of mankind in general, who under the diſpenſation, introduced by our firſt parents eating of the tree of knowledge, have made from age to age, ſuch gradual advances in it, as we are at this time arrived to; in which, ſtill farther improvements will be made.

IT has been ſhewn that the account which we have of this tranſaction, affords ſufficient evidence that this was the good and evil which they actually had knowledge of. And it has been hence likewiſe ſhewn that this knowledge was vouchſafed to them in a very eminent degree, from words that will ſupport the higheſt ſuppoſition we can frame from them, conſiſtent with reaſon and the analogy of faith.

AND theſe proofs have been drawn from the natural and received ſenſe of the ſeveral paſſages, without any forced conſtructions, or labour'd criticiſms to explain them away, or wreſt them from their genuine meaning.

I SHALL beg leave to draw a few inferences from the foregoing obſervations.

1. THE firſt and main concluſion to be drawn from hence, is, the reality of the hiſtory. For good and evil are real things, and the knowledge of them is real likewiſe; and it has been ſhewn how this was connected with the fall, and proceeded from it; and ſo conſiderable an effect produced by it,

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adds weight to the truth and credit of the whole hiſtory. The fact is ſpecified with all its circumſtances. It was by eating of the fruit of a certain tree, foretold to have this effect, that this new ſcene of things was opened. Nor can this be called a *fanciful ſcene*, the conſequences of which continue in nature to this day. Evil in all its forms has been the complaint of men in all ages ever ſince, and we hence ſee that all the good we enjoy or hope for, did, happily for us, proceed from the ſame ſource. Here more civil, ſacred, and natural hiſtory contained and connected together, than occurs any where elſe within ſo ſhort a compaſs: not only the cauſe of the preſent ſtate of man, of woman, of the earth, and of the ſerpent is ſhewn and aſcertained; but moreover, which concurs to ſtrengthen the reſt, the origin of all our knowledge is diſcerned, and of all the good as well as evil in nature.

2. To ſay that this is a *fanciful ſolution* of theſe things is not only *gratis dictum*, but contrary to all the rules of criticiſm, by which the truth and authenticity of other antient hiſtories are judged of; ſeveral, I might ſay, moſt of which relate matters whereof no

monuments at this time exiſt in nature, and yet are believed on their own bare authority. The expedition of a *Xerxes* has no more traces remaining of it by land, than the laſhes, with which that fantaſtical impotent prince chaſtiſed the ſea, left on the waters. The extravagant things related of him and other heroes of antiquity, are *paſſed away as a ſhip over the waves, which when it is gone by, the trace thereof cannot be found.* Wiſd. v. 10. and yet the credibility of them in general is not called in queſtion. On the other hand, the magnificent ruins of old *Greece* and *Rome* confirm the accounts which hiſtorians give us of the grandeur of thoſe renowned ſtates; and ſhall not the ruins of all nature ſtand as records to verify the hiſtory of their cauſe and origin, and that confirmed by many ſubſequent teſtimonies of the higheſt authority? As it appears that the doctrine of man's redemption from the fall, by the ſeed of the woman, ought to be underſtood by the *knowledge of good*, this greatly confirms that interpretation of the ſentence on the ſerpent, which ſuppoſes it to be a prophecy of that great bleſſing; by the words of which ſentence, the firſt rudiments of this knowledge were convey'd to

Adam.

Adam. Agreeably whereto it is worth obſerving, that God does not declare him to be ſo knowing till after the ſentence pronounced on the ſerpent. Theſe two texts reflect a mutual light on each other: as the one teaches us what we are to underſtand by the terms, *knowledge of good*, ſo that again illuſtrates and aſcertains the meaning of the ſentence on the ſerpent, and proves a remarkable guard to it; tho', as the moſt obvious truths are ſometimes overlooked, it has hitherto lain unobſerved — it ſhews that it was not without grounds, that this was aſſerted to be the chief foundation of religious hope and comfort for the firſt ages of the world; and evinces it to be a *ſure word of prophecy* — of a prophecy ſince fulfilled by the event; though it may not carry evidence enough to convince ſome, who to ſerve a turn can pretend great zeal for this kind of proof.

3. Do we not hence ſee how properly this is called, *The tree of knowledge of good and evil?* How our firſt parents learn'd in the event what evil was, by rendering themſelves obnoxious to it — and how they obtained the knowledge of good, in the remedy that God had provided for them in their

redemption? This, I ſay, they learn'd not by any ſecret charm, as has been inſinuated by a late writer,* but in the natural way of experience — a fatal and dear-bought experience. For it was acquired, not by any virtue in the fruit eaten, but by the act of eating alone; and any other act that had been forbidden would have produced the ſame effect. Do we not, moreover, ſee that it was on the higheſt reaſon and wiſdom that this prohibition was founded? that this knowledge, as it was the knowledge of evil, was both *criminal* and *hurtful* † to them? And that the knowledge even of good was *criminal* likewiſe, as God had thought fit for wiſe reaſons to reſtrain them from it; though this indeed could not be ſaid to be *hurtful*, which in its nature and deſign was ſo ſalutary, and by which they were recovered from their lapſed ſtate.

IT may be thought that the knowledge of good is not a proper ſubject of prohibition. But if it was ſuch good, as in their preſent ſtate they had no occaſion for, and was indeed unſuitable to it, why ſhould they be

* Dr *M.* Examination, *&c.* p. 104. † Ibid.

indulged

indulged it? Had it been ſimply good, it might not have ſeemed ſo agreeable to the goodneſs of the divine nature to withold it from them; though in that caſe, who could have ſaid, *what doeſt thou?* But good that could not be obtained without a mixture of much evil; good that, how great ſoever, was to be obtained conſequentially to the evil, and only as a remedy for it, was ſurely not improper to be witheld from them, in order to prevent that evil which made it neceſſary. For herein conſiſted the great heinouſneſs of their crime, that it cauſed ſuch an alteration to be made in the ſyſtem of God's government of the moral world, that, in order to ſave it and them from utter ruin, it became neceſſary that his own ſon ſhould ſuffer and die for them.

In a word, we ſee, that prohibited it was in expreſs and very peremptory terms, and from what has been ſaid, I hope the propriety of the prohibition is apparent. And thus, upon the whole, the tree of knowledge, from which one of the main objections againſt this hiſtory was taken, when rightly underſtood, will appear to be one of the greateſt arguments for it.

4. The

4. THE received ſenſe of the tree of knowledge, on which the foregoing explanation is founded, having been objected to; and another interpretation given by a writer of a quite different character from him whom I have had chiefly in view; it will be thought that he ought not to paſs unregarded. I deſire, therefore, it may be conſidered, that from what has been ſaid, it appears not only that a *change* was effected by the eating of this tree, both in the intellectual faculties, and in the condition and circumſtances of our firſt parents; but alſo what the nature of this change was, and how it was produced. — It has been ſhewn likewiſe, what acquiſitions of knowledge they made, beſides that of their infirmities, though that was pronounced to be impoſſible — that ſo far as their knowledge of good, was augmented, it was a change for the better, and ſo far as they were made acquainted with evil, for the worſe — As the tree had its name from this double knowledge, the two oppoſite parts of it ſerved as a counter-balance to each other. Its being endowed with the knowledge of *good* made it deſirable; and it ought to have ſomething in it

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that was ſo, in order to render it a teſt of obedience: but on the other hand, *evil* was a check upon this deſire; and the ſanction of death was in itſelf more than ſufficient to turn the ſcale and determine them to obedience. To take away the terror of this was the difficult taſk that the tempter had to perform; for which he had no other ſhift, but boldly to deny that their eating would be attended with any ſuch conſequence, *Ye ſhall not ſurely die*. And what greatly contributed to facilitate *Eve*'s belief of him was the repreſentation, he at the ſame time made to her, that their eyes ſhould be open'd, and that the light of knowledge and wiſdom, which would be let in upon them, would aſſimilate them to gods, for *God is Light*; though this knowledge had its inconveniences, and included that of evil, as well as good. However, we find, as it often happens in like caſes, that this was over-look'd. Wiſdom in general was the bait, which we find our parent *Eve* was unable to refuſe.

THAT the tree of knowledge includes the notion of a teſt of good and evil I readily allow; but this, if ſuppoſed to be the whole

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that was intended by it, will I preſume, be thought too low a ſenſe; nor do I believe it ever would have been conceived, but for want of rightly underſtanding the words in their more natural and obvious meaning; neither can the context in my opinion be ſo well accommodated to the former interpretation.

1. To tranſlate the tempter's words — *Ye ſhall be equal to gods*, theſe *diſcerners of good and evil*, avails but little to the purpoſe, becauſe the compariſon muſt ſtill be the ſame, and how the diſcerning of good and evil, *i. e.* in the ſenſe of the learned author, knowing whether their own conduct would be good or evil — how this, I ſay, is to be underſtood, as raiſing them to an equality with the Godhead, remains to be ſhewn. Moreover, when it is ſaid in the beginning of the verſe, *God doth know*, יֹדֵעַ we ſhould not expect the participle of this verb, in the latter part of it, to be underſtood in a different ſenſe — not *knowing*, but *diſcerning* good and evil; which implies not a ſimple knowledge as before, but a diſcriminating kind of it. And when it is ſaid preſently afterward that *their eyes were opened*, which ſurely implies

implies ſome degree of knowledge, and manifeſtly alludes to the tree of knowledge — Shall we tranſlate the next word וידעו, *and they diſcerned*, as a teſt, or ſimply, *they knew* that they were naked?

2. The improvement of the woman's condition, by releaſing her from ſervitude, is too looſe and general a ſenſe of the verb השכיל, and very wide of its primary and literal ſignification, which is *to make one wiſe*, and which cannot be denied to correſpond with the name of the tree, as both the one and the other do with the character of it given by the tempter. The making uſe of two different words of the ſame ſignification, concerning the ſame thing, one would think ſhould be looked upon as a means of aſcertaining the ſenſe of it, and of each other. But if the hiſtorian's changing of the word ידע, which he had uſed all along, for another in this place, be an argument that he did not deſign here to expreſs the ſame thing, I hope it will be allowed, that in thoſe places where he does uſe it, he deſigns to expreſs the ſame thing by it; and in that caſe we have ſeen what that muſt be.

Lastly,

LASTLY, the man's *acting or behaving as if he was equal to God*, by endeavouring to throw off his authority, is not *really becoming equal to him, as to the teſt of good and evil.* Beſides, I think it is not clear from the inſtances produced, or any other, that the ſingle particle כ, ever ſignifies *equality*, but that I ſhall not inſiſt upon. For theſe reaſons I cannot conſent to give up the commonly received ſenſe of theſe paſſages for this, otherwiſe, ingenious Interpretation, notwithſtanding the merit of its author.* To proceed,

5. THE foregoing obſervations will help us to account, in a better manner, for our firſt parents expulſion out of paradiſe, and for their being deprived of the uſe of the tree of life. There was more truth in the devil's promiſe, than probably he meant, or was aware of, when he told them that *their eyes ſhould be open'd*, and *that they ſhould be as gods, knowing good and evil.* Their eyes were truly opened, and they caſt them both backwards and forwards. They ſaw clearly

* See Dr *Rutherforth*'s eſſay on virtue, chap. xi. p. 273 note; and his anſwer to Dr *Middleton*. p. 183.

into

into the nature of that diſpenſation, they had hitherto been under, and into that, likewiſe, for which they were going to exchange it. They ſaw, that, had they continued under the former, they ſhould have enjoyed an uninterrupted immortality. They ſaw, likewiſe, that they ſhould recover it by the latter, ſince that likewiſe contained the promiſe of eternal life, but that the way to it was thro' the valley of the ſhadow of death. This was a diſagreeable paſſage, and therefore they might be deſirous of avoiding it, if poſſible; and might entertain hopes, that while they had the tree of life within their reach, it might ſtill furniſh a remedy for their mortality. If they did not reaſon thus, how can we account for this paſſage? *And the Lord God ſaid, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil; and now leſt he put forth his hand, and take alſo of the tree of life, and eat and live for ever — therefore the Lord God ſent him forth from the Garden of Eden.* Gen. iii. 22, 23. *q. d.* The man now having a clear inſight into the nature both of his former and preſent ſtate, I ſee his deſire is now as ſtrongly bent on the tree of life, as he was before indifferent towards it; and thinks too late of having recourſe to that

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as a remedy for his paſt ill conduct, of which he ſlighted the uſe in order to prevent it. Whilſt he has it in his view, it will but draw off his attention from his duty, and the means appointed for his recovery, and fix it upon that which is now foreign to his ſtate and condition, and would anſwer no end but to confound the two covenants. It is neceſſary, therefore, to remove him hence.

THE tree of life was the ſymbol of the firſt covenant, and the tree of knowledge the teſt of it; whereby it became a means of introducing the ſecond, and initiating the ſubjects of it, in the great myſteries which it contained. Among theſe a reſtoration to the tree of life was one, *Rev.* xxii. together with a reſtoration of their faculties, to enable them to perform the terms of the covenant which they had now broken; of which, poſſibly, ſome intimation might be given them. This might excite their deſire to ſhorten their work, and immediately to ſeize the healing fruit, which they look'd upon as the reſtorative of their nature. But as this was not to be effected in ſo eaſy a manner, and they would be apt to think light of a malady that admitted of ſo cheap a cure; God thought fit,

having

having laid aſide the firſt covenant, to remove them from the proſpect of it.

Lastly, it may hence I think be juſtly inferr'd, that as our firſt parents obtained the knowledge of evil, and of its author, by eating of the tree of knowledge, ſo they could not by the nature of their former ſtate have had this knowledge ſooner. Our firſt parents were placed in paradiſe under ſuch an excellent diſpenſation, that they were not ſo much as to know what evil was: and conſequently needed not, nor indeed could, under their preſent œconomy, know any thing of the author of it, neither, probably, could they have any idea of him. This knowledge was not to be convey'd to them any other way, than by eating of the tree of knowledge of good and evil in general. To aſk, therefore, why they had not had knowledge of the devil in this ſtate, is to aſk why they had not been allowed to eat of the tree of knowledge at the ſame time that it was forbidden them? Or why they had not eaten of it before they ate of it? They had a plain prohibition given them, ſuited to their ſtate and nature, and, if they had but abſtained from tranſgreſſing againſt it, they

would have been ſafe and happy without ever knowing any thing of the tempter, who could not poſſibly hurt them any other way; and this way they were cautioned to guard againſt him, as much as if they had been apprized of him. This ſingle point was all they had to attend to, ſo that their duty could not have been reduced within a narrower compaſs. It was, moreover, inforced upon them by the moſt powerful ſanction. They were forbidden under the denunciation of death, to eat of this tree, or, as *Eve* confeſſed, ſo much as *to touch it*. And as a counter-balance to it, the tree of life was placed oppoſite to it, in order to divert and draw off any inclinations towards it, and likewiſe to repair their ſpiritual and natural decays, and invigorate them in their duty. They had, likewiſe, an inſight into the brute creation imparted to them, ſeemingly beyond their attainments or poſſible proficiency in other reſpects, in ſo early a time of their lives. And, among theſe, they knew the ſerpent to be the moſt *ſubtile* of the whole tribe, and conſequently the moſt to be ſuſpected and guarded againſt. And what would they have more? Was not this ſufficient, in itſelf, to have kept them within the bounds

bounds of their duty? Governors think it enough to publiſh their laws, and let their ſubjects tranſgreſs them at their peril. But God Almighty did more in this caſe. He did as much as could be done for free agents. He appointed them a ſufficient means of grace and aſſiſtance in the tree of life, which was all that could be done, without infringing their liberty. And this fully juſtifies the divine conduct herein, and contains a ſufficient anſwer to the queſtion. — "Since "the exiſtence of a wicked, malicious, invi- "ſible Being, of great power — was neither "diſcoverable to the reaſon of our firſt pa- "rents, nor revealed to them by their ma- "ker, how can we imagine that God would "expoſe their ſimplicity unarmed and unin- "ſtructed to the aſſaults of an inſidious "tempter, ſo greatly ſuperior to them, both "in craft and power?" * It likewiſe vindicates the permiſſion of the fall, into which this queſtion is reſolved, ſo that the blame of it, muſt be imputed only to themſelves.

If farther ſatisfaction be wanted in this reſpect, I preſume it may be found in a treatiſe, entitled, *An Eſſay on Redemption*, p. 42.

* Dr *M.* Exam. p. 106.

where the permiſſion of the fall is more fully vindicated, and the laws of liberty are ſtated and explained.

IT is time now to proceed to the conſideration of ſome other paſſages in ſcripture, alluding to the fall.

IN the xiiith chapter of *Iſaiah*, the fall of *Babylon* is foretold; and a great part of the xivth is taken up in deſcribing the dreadful overthrow of its haughty monarch. V. 5, it is ſaid, *The Lord hath broken the ſtaff of the wicked, and the ſcepter of the rulers. He who ſmote the people in wrath with a continual ſtroke — is perſecuted and none hindreth.* Then the prophet diverts his diſcourſe to this wicked prince himſelf: v. 9. *Hell from beneath is moved for thee, to meet thee at thy coming* — v. 12. *how art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, ſon of the morning? how art thou cut down to the ground, that didſt weaken the nations! For thou haſt ſaid in thine heart — I will aſcend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the ſtars of God. I will be like the Moſt High. Yet thou ſhalt be brought down to hell, to the ſides of the pit* — with much more to the ſame purpoſe: V. 29. the prophet turns his

his diſcourſe to the land of *Paleſtine*, in theſe words — *Rejoice not thou whole* Paleſtina, *becauſe the rod of him that ſmote thee is broken; for out of the ſerpents root ſhall come forth a cockatrice, and his fruit ſhall be a fiery flying ſerpent.* Upon comparing theſe expreſſions together, I muſt own, that at firſt ſight, they greatly ſtruck me. For, ſuppoſing them to be all parts of the ſame paſſage, and to relate to one and the ſame ſubject, it is very remarkable that he who is in the 12th verſe addreſſed by the name of *Lucifer fallen from heaven*, ſhould, in the 29th, be called *the ſerpent, from whoſe root ſhould come forth a cockatrice, and whoſe fruit ſhould be a fiery flying ſerpent.* That by *Lucifer* is meant the prince of the fallen angels, is generally agreed both by antient and modern commentators. The title of *Lucifer, ſon of the morning*, is but another name for the morning-ſtar; which latter appellation is in ſcripture applied to none but our Saviour, and thoſe who moſt nearly approach him in the excellency of their natures, the angelick choir. Thus, *Rev.* xxii. 16. *I Jeſus am the bright* and morning-ſtar. And *Job* xxxviii. 7. *The* morning-ſtars *ſang together, and all the ſons of God ſhouted for joy.* Who, therefore can

poſſibly be deſcribed under the character of a morning-ſtar fallen from heaven, but one of thoſe exalted Beings; who, as the ſcripture informs us, *kept not their firſt eſtate, but left their own habitations in* heaven, *Jude* vi, and *were caſt down to hell?* 2. *Pet.* ii. 4. And that ſecond overthrow, which the prince of theſe apoſtate angels received, when he was diſpoſſeſſed by our Saviour of that uſurped power which he exerciſed over mankind, is deſcribed by Chriſt in terms not very different from the foregoing — *I beheld Satan as lightening, fall from heaven.* *Luke* xix. 18. It is true the powers of the earth are often underſtood to be deſcribed by ſtars fallen from heaven in the prophetical language; and accordingly the deſcription in the place before us, is in a ſecondary ſenſe applied to the king of *Babylon.* But it is obſervable, that in no other place, does any ſuch deſcription occur under the character of a *morning-ſtar*; to which, likewiſe, a perſonality is aſcribed through the whole paſſage, which, I think, is never elſewhere given the ſtars in this ſenſe: *Lucifer* is addreſſed in language that ſo plainly points out the fall of Satan, and the circumſtances of it, that it is obvious to every common reader;

nor could the prophet have choſen a more ſuitable alluſion, in threatening the deſtruction of a proud and inſolent tyrant, who, in imitation of the pride of the devil, exalted himſelf againſt God and his truth, and was the inſtrument of Satan, in promoting idolatry and wickedneſs in the world.* We ſhall, hereafter, meet with this alluſion, applied by another of the prophets in the ſame manner.

IF, therefore, by Lucifer be meant Satan, and if the ſame perſon is called ſerpent in the latter part of this paſſage, theſe images are not joined together for nothing; nor can we ſo ſatisfactorily account for ſuch a connection, as on the ſuppoſition, that Satan and the ſerpent were united in the act of tempting *Eve*.

BUT, on the other hand, it is not to be diſſembled, that the latter part of the chapter, from v. 28. is generally underſtood to contain a diſtinct prophecy, and, according to ſome, to begin a diſtinct period of prophecies; and therefore cannot well be ſuppoſed to have any relation to what goes before. But,

* See *Lowth* on the place.

as upon examination, this ſuppoſition, with the interpretation built upon it, appear to me to be without ſufficient foundation, it is fit I ſhould give my reaſons before I offer another expoſition.

THE burden of *Babylon*, according to the common interpretation, ends v. 27. and the next verſe begins a new prophecy quite independant of it againſt the *Philiſtines*, with theſe words — *In the year that king* Ahaz *died, was this burden. Rejoice not thou whole* Paleſtina, *becauſe the rod of him that ſmote thee is broken. For out of the ſerpent's root ſhall come forth a cockatrice, and his fruit ſhall be a fiery flying ſerpent.*

THE *Philiſtines* exulting at the death of *Ahaz*, according to this interpretation, gave occaſion to this prophecy againſt them, which admoniſhes them not to rejoice, *becauſe the rod of him that ſmote them was broken*, that is, becauſe *Ahaz*,* the grandſon of *Uzziah*, who had given them a ſevere blow, was dead; for as much as a cockatrice, or fiery flying ſerpent is more to be dreaded than a com-

* Dr *Lowth*, by an overſight, calls *Ahaz* the ſon, and *Hezekiah* the grandſon, of *Uzziah*; *Ahaz* was the ſon of *Jotham*.

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noh viper, ſo much more reaſon had they to fear *Hezekiah*, the ſon of *Ahaz*, even than his * great grand-father *Uzziah*, becauſe he would make an entire conqueſt of their country.

MY Objections againſt this interpretation are theſe:

1. THE *Philiſtines* had no particular reaſon to rejoice at the death of *Ahaz*, from whom they had gain'd more than they had loſt to his grand-father; and under whom the ſtate of the Kingdom of *Judah* was ſo ſhattered that they could not expect or wiſh for a more feeble enemy. *Comp.* 2 *Chr.* xxvi. 6. xxviii. 18.

2. *Ahaz* I think is very improperly characterized by *the rod of him that ſmote them*. For tho' a man's offſpring is ſometimes repreſented by a *rod* or *ſhoot* that grows out of him as from the ſtem of a tree, as in *ch.* xi. 1. yet it cannot have that ſignification here; for being join'd with *ſmiting* it conveys quite a different idea; beſides, that in that ſenſe the original word uſed is חטר or נצר but שבט which is the word here tranſlated *rod*

* Ibid ut ſupra.

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is never uſed in that ſenſe; the metaphorical ſignification of it generally being, as here it muſt be, either rule and power, when it requires to be, as it frequently is, tranſlated *Scepter*, *ſee v.* 5. or elſe *puniſhment*, which it is the inſtrument of likewiſe, ſo that by *the rod of him that ſmote thee* muſt be meant his power, or rather means of puniſhing. —— But in that ſenſe it cannot be applied to *Ahaz*, who could not have been made uſe of by his grand-father in his invaſion of the *Philiſtines*, as he was not then born.

3. IT does not appear from hiſtory, that *Hezekiah* chaſtiſed the *Philiſtines* more ſeverely than *Uzziah*, as he muſt have done to make good the words of the prophecy. For he is only ſaid to have over-run their country; whereas *Uzziah* diſmantled their towns, built cities of ſtrength among them, and kept them in ſubjection. Comp. 2 *Chron.* xxvi. 6. & 2 *Kings* xviii. 8. nay, it does not appear that *Hezekiah* recoverd that portion of his kingdom, which they had conquer'd from his father, much leſs could he be ſaid to have *kill'd their root with famine*, and to have ſlain their remnant, *v.* 30, and to have *diſſolved* or deſtroyed

ſtroyed their whole country or conſtitution, *v.* 31.

4. THE enemy that was to do this was to come from the north, *There ſhall come from the north a ſmoke, ib.* And our commentators indeed are pleaſed to ſay that *Judæa* lay northward of *Paleſtine*; but by what geography I know not, it being rather ſouth-eaſt of it. Nor ſhould I care to apply the terms *ſerpent* and *cockatrice* to the friends and members of God's church, which in their nature are more properly applicable to the enemies of it, and are generally ſo applied in ſcripture.

THESE are the difficulties which this interpretation ſeems to labour under.

I SHALL now offer another, and conſider this latter part of the chapter as relative to the prophecy immediately preceding it, concerning the fall of *Babylon* and its proud monarch. Now it is to be obſerved that the whole xivth chapter, from *v.* 4. to 28, is taken up with a deſcription of the overthrow of ſome tyrannical power, which had greatly diſtreſſed the nations, and over whoſe

whoſe fall the prophet greatly rejoices, and continues his triumph for the deliverance of the church of God from the oppreſſions of this powerful enemy, till *v.* 27. He then diverts his diſcourſe to the *Philiſtines*, and tells them that they had no part in this joy: for tho' he had been a ſcourge to them as well as their neighbours, and they might think themſelves happy in the removal of him; yet other and more dreadful enemies ſhould ariſe out of his loins, who would harraſs them much worſe than he had done — *out of the ſerpent's root ſhall come forth a cockatrice*, &c.

THIS, it muſt be allow'd, is not unnatural; but it will be expected it ſhould be ſhewn how it is to be accommodated to this ſenſe. To proceed then to that purpoſe — As ſome particular perſon is here meant, who had greatly diſtreſſed both the *Jews* and *Philiſtines*, I know of none who better anſwers the character given him thro'out this whole chapter, than *Sennacherib* the proud *Aſſyrian* monarch. He had taken all the *fenced cities* of *Judah*, 2 *Kings* xviii. 13. and threaten'd *Jeruſalem* itſelf with imminent deſtruction, which

which was reſpited only for a ſhort interval by the payment of a heavy tribute.

The *Philiſtines* likewiſe had their ſhare in this calamity. For * he invaded *Phœnicia*, and attempted *Egypt*, and † as ſome think, with ſucceſs, harraſſing it from one end to the other for three years together. But he could not open his way into it, nor even attempt it, without firſt ſubduing *Paleſtine*. Accordingly, if he be the *Sargon* of *Iſa.* xx. 1. as archbiſhop *Uſher*, Dr *Prideaux*, and the commentators think, we find his General *Tartan* ſent before him to take *Aſhdod*, a ſtrong city of the *Philiſtines*, and a kind of Key to *Egypt*, which accordingly he effected. Beſides, as he is ſaid to have taken all the fenced cities of *Judah*, thoſe muſt be included in the number, which, as has been obſerved, probably continued in the hands of the *Philiſtines*, ſince the time that they had conquer'd them from *Ahaz*, viz. thoſe of the low country, and the ſouth of *Judah*, mentioned by name, 2 *Chr.* xxviii. 18. which they are ſaid to have taken, and to have *dwelt* in them.

* See Sir *Iſaac Newton's Chron.* p. 281.
† See Dr *Prid. Connect.* part 1. p. 31. 8vo. edit.

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THIS, however, is certain, that in his approaches to *Jeruſalem*, *Sennacherib* laid ſiege to *Lachiſh* and *Libnah*, 2 *Kings* xix. 8. which cities were ſituated between it and *Paleſtine*, and *Iſaiah* mentions ſeveral other places through which he had paſſed in his march thither, which lay in his way from *Paleſtine*, and ſeveral of which were frontier towns of *Judæa* towards that country, *Iſa.* x. 28. *& ſeqq.* This plainly demonſtrates his courſe to have been from *Paleſtine*, which therefore he probably ravaged both in his way to, and from *Egypt*. From all which it appears, that *Paleſtine*, as well as *Judæa*, had been greatly diſtreſſed by him.

THE ſudden deſtruction of *Sennacherib*'s numerous hoſt, conſiſting of 185,000 men, by one ſtroke of divine vengeance, 2 *Kings* xix. 35. and his own untimely death by the ſword of thoſe that *came forth of his own bowels*, 2 *Chr.* xxxii. 21. well anſwers the deſcription of his overthrow in the prophecy. But the queſtion is, how this prophecy, which was expreſly delivered of the king of *Babylon*, can be applicable to *Sennacherib*, who was king of *Aſſyria*, and not *Babylon*?

Now

Now, in anſwer to this, it may be obſerved, that the names of *Aſſyria* and *Babylon*, are frequently uſed the one for the other, and conſidered as the ſame empire and the ſame country, * both by profane and ſacred authors. (*See* 2 *Kings*, xxiii. 29. 2 *Chron.* xxiii. 11. *Nehem.* ix. 32.) And Sir *Iſ. Newton* remarks, that all the kings of *Babylon*, in the canon of *Ptolemy*, are called *Aſſyrians* †. And which is an inſtance of the great conformity of this canon to ſcripture, agreeable to what has been obſerved in other reſpects, it is remarkable that in the place before us, he who is called *king of Babylon*, v. 4. is, v. 25. ſtiled the *Aſſyrian*. *I will break the Aſſyrian in my Land, and upon my mountains tread him under foot*; which was moſt remarkably fulfilled by the deſtruction of *Sennacherib*'s army on the mountains of *Judah*.

Now, to account for this intercommunity of names, we muſt obſerve, that it is ſuppoſed, ‡ that both theſe monarchies were founded by one and the ſame perſon, PUL, from whom *Sennacherib* was but the third in

* Univ. Hiſt. Vol. iv. p. 334. 8vo edit.
† Chron. p. 279. ‡ Ibid.

deſcent;

deſcent; and were governed by princes of the ſame family, between whom a perfect harmony reigned, the younger branch at *Babylon* acknowledging a kind of ſuperiority in, and ſubjection to, the elder at *Nineveh*, under whom they were rather governors than kings.*

IT is evident from ſcripture, that either by compact or conqueſt, the kingdom of *Babylon* was under ſome ſort of ſubjection about this time to the kings of *Aſſyria*. For when *Shalmaneſer* carried away the ten tribes of *Iſrael* into captivity, among other colonies which he brought into *Samaria* in their ſtead, there was one from *Babylon*, 2 *Kings* xvii. 24. over whom he could not have exerciſed ſuch deſpotic power, unleſs they had been under his dominion.

IT is, indeed, conjectured by ſome, from *Ezra* iv. 2, 10. that this tranſportation was not made till the reign of *Eſar-haddon*; but I think without ſufficient foundation. For the *Babylonians*, and the reſt of the nations mentioned *Ezra* iv. 9. are in the next verſe

* *Univerſal Hiſt.* vol. 4. p. 391,-3.

ſaid

ſaid to be brought over into *Samaria* by *Aſnappar*; but it is not certain, nor agreed among the commentators, that this *Aſnappar*, v. 10. is *Eſar-haddon*, v. 2. *Grotius* is of opinion that *Aſnappar* is *Shalmaneſer*, which beſt reconciles 2 *Kings* xvii. 24. to this text of *Ezra* iv. 9. and nothing hinders on either ſuppoſition why one colony might not be tranſplanted from *Babylon* by *Shalmaneſer*, under whoſe ſtory ſuch a fact is placed, 2 *Kings* xvii. and another afterwards by *Eſar-haddon*. Nor is it at all probable, that contrary to policy and intereſt, and to the cuſtom of the *Aſſyrian* princes at that time, a fertile country, ſuch as *Samaria* was, ſhould be totally evacuated of its inhabitants by a general captivity, as this, by *Shalmaneſer*, appears to have been from 2 *Kings* xvii. 6. and that he and his ſucceſſors ſhould ſuffer it to lie deſolate and uncultivated, and not think of repeopling it till forty three years afterwards; for that ſpace of time is reckoned to have paſſed between the two captivities of *Samaria* by *Shalmaneſer* and *Eſar-haddon**. Add to this, that *Sennacherib* mentions the children of *Eden*, which were in *Thelaſſar*, ſuppoſed to have been a province of *Chaldæa*,

* See *Iſa.* vii. 8. with *Lowth* in loc.

among the conqueſts of his fathers; nor is it probable that he loſt any acquiſitions of his predeceſſors, but rather added to them, as he was a great and ſucceſsful warrior, till the deſtruction of his army in *Judæa*, and his diſgrace, thereupon, when the *Medes* revolted from him. Acordingly, Sir *Iſaac Newton* ſeems to reckon *Chaldæa* among the provinces of the *Aſſyrian* empire, in the reign of *Sennacherib*, as well as of *Eſar-haddon*, his ſon*.

FOR theſe reaſons, the title of king of *Babylon* might not improperly be applied to *Sennacherib*.

IT remains to be ſhewn how the latter part of the prophecy, which concerns the *Philiſtines*, was fulfilled by any of the deſcendants or ſucceſſors of *Sennacherib*, as the terms of it, according to this expoſition, require — *out of the ſerpent's root ſhall come forth a cockatrice*, &c. importing, that ſome of his poſterity ſhould afflict them much more grievouſly than he had done. And this we ſhall find to have been effected, both by his ſon and grandſon, and others of his

* *Chron.* p. 283

ſucceſſors,

ſucceſſors, to that degree, that at length, their whole conſtitution was *diſſolved*, as in v. 31. by theſe and other of their enemies.

IT is remarked of his ſon, *Eſar-haddon*, who is ſtiled in *Ezra* iv. 10. as ſome underſtand it, the *great and noble Aſnappar*, that he was particularly kind to the *Jews*, *Tobit* i. 21,-2. which was a ſort of pledge of the accompliſhment of the prophecy, that they ſhould have better days after the fall of him that afflicted them, *Iſa.* xiv. 30, 32.

Now this prince is ſaid * to have ſubdued all *Syria* and *Paleſtine* in a more effectual manner than any of his predeceſſors ever did. He is by ſome † ſuppoſed to have been the *Sargon* of *Iſaiah*, under whom, *Tartan*, his father's lieutenant-general, continued to ſerve, and by whom he was ſent to beſiege and take *Aſhdod*. *Iſa.* xx. 1. And, indeed, the name *Sargon* has a great affinity with the other names, by which this prince is called, *Aſordan*, by the LXX. *Aſſaradin* in *Ptolemy's* canon, and *Sarchedon* by *Tobit*, chap. i. 21. But whether it was taken by father or ſon, *Aſhdod* continued in the hands

* *Univerſal Hiſt.* p. 325. n. I. † Ib. n. K.

of the *Aſſyrians*, and therefore, probably the whole country of *Paleſtine*, likewiſe, was ſubject to them, till *Pſammiticus*, king of *Egypt*, wreſted this fortreſs from them, which coſt him a blockade of twenty-nine years to effect; during all which time, the country muſt have groaned under all the calamities of war.

WE are, likewiſe, informed in the book of *Judith*, that *Nabuchodonoſor*, who is ſuppoſed to be the ſame with *Saoſduchinus*, the ſon of *Eſar-haddon*, having reſolved to *avenge himſelf on the whole earth*, chap. ii. 1. ſent forth his chief captain, *Holofernes*, with a great army to *cover all the face of the earth*, weſtward, ver. 19. And having ravaged all places whither he came, none being able to withſtand him, the fear and dread of him fell upon all the inhabitants of the ſea-coaſts, which were in *Sidon* and *Tyrus*; and they that dwelt in *Azotus* and *Aſkalon* feared him greatly, ver. 28. And having made their ſubmiſſion to him, *he came down towards the ſea-coaſt, both he and his army, and ſet garriſons in the high cities*, carried off their *choſen men, caſt down their frontiers, and cut down their groves*. chap. iii. 6, 8.

THUS

THUS, in the terror and rapidity of his march, he might be ſaid to reſemble *a fiery flying ſerpent*, as his father, from the ſore plagues which he made the *Philiſtines* feel, might be compared to a *cockatrice*.

AFTER this, the prophet *Jeremy* denounced God's judgments, among others, againſt all the kings of the land of the *Philiſtines*, xxv. 20. to be executed by the hand of *Nebuchadrezzar* king of *Babylon*, by name, which he had time enough to effect, while he lay before *Tyre*, which coſt him a thirteen year's ſiege to take. And now the period of their final deſtruction was come. By their ſubjection to the *Aſſyrians*, they had long ago loſt their liberties, and at the ſame time, their country became the ſeat of a long and obſtinate war, being the conſtant bone of contention between the two kingdoms of *Egypt* and *Aſſyria*:* till at length its very *root was killed with famine*, its *remnant* † *ſlain*, and a total *diſſolution* of it enſued, according to the prediction in the place before us, ver. 30, 31. and ſeveral concurrent ones of the other pro-

* *Univerſal Hiſt.* Vol. 2. p. 253. † Comp. *Jer.* xxv. 20.

phets. (See *Jer.* xxv. and xlvii. *Ezek.* xxv. *Joel* iii. *Amos* i. *Zeph.* ii. 4-6. *Zech.* ix. 5.

As it appears how applicable the prophecies in this chapter are to *Sennacherib*, his ſon *Eſar-haddon*, his grandſon *Saoſduchinus*, and other ſucceeding kings of *Babylon*, the next queſtion to be reſolved, is — how this latter prophecy, concerning the *Philiſtines*, comes to be prefaced with this date? *In the year that king* Ahaz *died, was this burden*, ver. 28. If this prophecy had no relation to *Ahaz*, why ſhould *Ahaz*'s name be mentioned in it? Now it is not very clear from the words or context, whether they relate to the foregoing or following prophecy. For this burden, dated at the death of king *Ahaz*, may mean the burden of *Babylon* before, as well as that of *Paleſtine*, which follows. And if it be underſtood of the former, it might be intended as a very ſeaſonable conſolation to the *Jewiſh* nation, under the low * and diſtreſſed ſtate, to which they muſt have been reduced towards the cloſe of a reign, that was attended with a continued ſeries of ill ſucceſs, to ſignify to them

* See 2 *Chron.* xxviii. 19. and ſeqq.

that

that the *Lord would have mercy on* Jacob, and would *yet chuſe Iſrael*, and that they ſhould *rule over their oppreſſors*, ver. 1 2. — that he would *break the ſtaff of the wicked, and the ſceptre of the rulers, who ſmote the people in wrath with a continual ſtroke*, ver. 5, 6. *i. e.* the kings of *Aſſyria*, of whom it is ſaid, that they *diſtreſſed* Ahaz, *but ſtrengthened him not*, 2 *Chr.* xxviii. 20.—that the *firſt born of the poor ſhould feed, and the needy lie down in ſafety* — for that *the Lord had founded* Zion, *and that the poor of his people ſhould truſt in it.* ver. 30, 32.

THE date of this prophecy, in the end of the reign of *Ahaz*, might be farther intended to prove that it was delivered before the event foretold—the overthrow of *Sennacherib* and his army, which happened in the fourteenth year of the following reign of his ſon *Hezekiah*, and is recorded, chap. xxxvi. xxxvii. of this book, to point out the completion of the prophecy, and bring it nearer to our view, than as it ſtands, though in almoſt the ſame words, in 2 *Kings*.

IN this view of the matter, this circumſtance of the date may be underſtood to re-

late indifferently to the prophecy that follows, as well as to that which goes before it. Indeed, both of them, according to the foregoing interpretation, muſt be ſuppoſed to be delivered about the ſame time; and the latter, as well as former, might adminiſter comfort to the *Jews*, ſince it muſt revive their broken ſpirits, to be aſſured that the *Philiſtines*, who had always been their moſt bitter enemies, and had particularly diſtreſſed them in this reign, ſhould at length be totally vanquiſhed and deſtroyed; whilſt *Zion*, as low as it then was, ſhould again revive and flouriſh.

I WOULD farther recommend to obſervation, that ſome characters in this latter prophecy, ſhew it to be particularly applicable to the *Aſſyrians*, if they do not in a manner reſtrain it to them. It is ſaid, v. 29, *Rejoice not thou whole Paleſtina, becauſe the* rod *of him that ſmote thee is broken.* — Now it is obſervable, that chap. x. ver. 5. the *Aſſyrian* is called the *rod* of God's anger, and the *ſtaff* of his indignation; and, ver. 24, O my people, be not afraid of the *Aſſyrian*, he ſhall *ſmite* thee with a *rod*, and lift up his *ſtaff* againſt thee. And, ver. 3, 6.

of

of this xivth chap. the Lord hath broken the *ſtaff* of the wicked, and the *ſcepter* of the rulers: he who *ſmote* the people in wrath with a continual *ſtroke*, he who ruled the nations in anger is perſecuted, and none hindereth.

To proceed, v. 31. it is ſaid — *howl, O gate! cry, O city! thou whole Paleſtina art diſſolved; for there ſhall come from* the north *a ſmoke, and none ſhall be alone in his appointed times.* Now it is remarkable that the land of *Aſſyria* and *Chaldæa* are conſtantly repreſented as north of *Judæa* and *Paleſtine*, and when either of thoſe countries, *Egypt*, or even *Phœnicia*, are threaten'd with a viſit from the kings of *Aſſyria* or *Babylon*, as they frequently are by the prophets, they are ſtill repreſented as coming from the *north*.

THUS, *Jer.* XXV. 9. *Behold I will ſend and take all the families* of the north, *ſaith the Lord, and* Nebuchadnezzar, *the king of* Babylon, *and will bring them againſt this land, and againſt all theſe nations round about*, &c.

EZEK.

EZEK. xxvi. 7. *Thus ſaith the Lord, behold I will bring upon* Tyrus, Nebuchadnezzar *king of Babylon, a king of kings, from the* north, *&c. Jer.* xlvi. 6, 10. The city *Carchemiſh* is ſaid to be in the *north* by the river *Euphrates. Jer.* vi. 1, 22. And elſewhere, evil is threaten'd from the *north*; that is, from the ſame quarter. On the other hand, *Zeph.* ii. 13. *The Lord will ſtretch out his hand againſt the* north *and deſtroy* Aſſyria, *and make* Nineveh *a deſolation*; and not to be too tedious about a matter ſo plain, *Zion* is bid to *flee from the land of the* north, *and he that dwelt with the Daughter of* Babylon *to deliver her ſelf, Zech.* ii. 6, 7. See likewiſe *Iſa.* xli. 25. *Jer.* i. 13, 14, 15 — iii. 18 — x. 22 — xvi. 15 — xxiii. 8 — xxxi. 8. *Zech.* vi. 8.

THIS being manifeſtly ſo, can we now avoid concluding that the *ſmoke* which, in the place before us, was to come from the *north*, muſt come from *Aſſyria*, and not *Judæa*; unleſs it can be proved that *Judæa* likewiſe is deſcribed in ſcripture as *north* of *Paleſtine*, which I do not find any inſtance of? *

I WOULD

* MAY it not hence be queſtion'd, by the way, whether theſe countries have their proper bearings and ſituations given

I WOULD offer one obſervation more on the laſt verſe of this prophecy — 'what ſhall one then anſwer to the *Meſſengers of the nation?*' "That the Lord hath founded *Zion*, "and the poor of his people ſhall truſt in it." Now what particular nation can be here meant, and what meſſengers can theſe be, but *Tartan*, *Rabſaris* and *Rabſhakeh*, who are expreſly call'd the *Meſſengers of the king of* Aſſyria, chap. xxxvii. 9. and were ſent by him to reproach and blaſpheme the living God, and to make a peremptory demand of the ſurrender of the city of *Jeruſalem?* And what more proper anſwer, or more ſuitable to the account which we have of the behaviour of *Hezekiah* at that juncture, than this which is here ſaid to be given? *viz.* that the *Lord had founded* Zion, *and that the poor of his people ſhould truſt in it.*

I HAVE detained the reader thus long about this paſſage, becauſe ſo many hiſtorical facts were neceſſarily to be cleared up in it; but as I flatter myſelf that every particular will appear fully to cor-

given them in our preſent maps, which place *Aſſyria* and *Chaldæa* almoſt due eaſt of *Phœnicia* and *Paleſtine?* And if our geography were examined by the ſcripture, might it not in ſome particulars be rectified by it, as ancient chronology has been of late?

reſpond

reſpond with the interpretation here given to the whole, it becomes thereby the better eſtabliſh'd; whence we may upon good grounds conclude — that the xivth chapter of *Iſaiah* is all one continued ſeries — that the two prophecies contained in it, have a near relation to each other — particularly, that the ſame perſon who is ſtiled *Lucifer*, ver. 12. is meant by the *Serpent*, ver. 29. — and that as by *Lucifer* is underſtood the prince of the apoſtate angels, whoſe fall is generally, and upon good grounds, thought to be alluded to in the deſcription of that of *Sennacherib* in the former part of the chapter; ſo in the 29th verſe, the alluſion to his aſſuming the *form of a Serpent* (which he did to tempt our parent *Eve)* and to the *ſeed* or *fruit* of the Serpent likewiſe, mentioned in the iiid chapter of *Geneſis*, is no leſs plain and convincing.

I SHALL now proceed to the conſideration of a paſſage in another of the prophetical books, which, when placed in its proper light, I believe will be allowed to contain a very ſtrong and ſtriking alluſion to the fall of our firſt parents, if it is not rather to be looked upon as an expreſs declaration,

that

that the devil was perſonally concerned in this important event.

THE paſſage I mean is *Ezek.* xxviii. 11, 19. The ſtyle of this prophet is obſerved to be often very majeſtic and ſublime, ſuitably to the dignity of the ſubjects of which he treats; and he is particularly remarkable for the height and grandeur of his compariſons. The ſubject of his prophecies are the captivity and afflictions, the reſtoration and flouriſhing ſtate of the *Jewiſh* church, which is generally underſtood to be typical of the chriſtian. And he alſo threatens the enemies both of the one and the other with the divine vengeance, which he foretels would overtake them for their perſecutions of the true church of God. And among others, he, in this and the two foregoing chapters, denounces God's judgments againſt *Tyre*, and her proud aſpiring monarch.

THIS prince is deſcribed as being beyond meaſure elated with his greatneſs, and aſſuming to himſelf an equality even with the God-head, *I am God, I ſit in the ſeat of God*, was his preſumptuous ſpeech. His political knowledge and ſagacity, the graceful-

fulneſs and majeſty of his perſon, and his other accompliſhments, which are acknowledged to have been extraordinary, had thus puffed him up, and tempted him to aſcribe his great riches and affluence to his own merit; nor did he at the ſame time ſcruple the moſt iniquitous means to increaſe them. From this character of him we may judge of the propriety of the prophet's compariſon of him to the prince of the apoſtate angels, the grand adverſary of God's church and people from the beginning of the world.

To complete the reſemblance, ver. 7, 10. he foretells his downfal. And then, by the divine command, ver. 11. he takes up his lamentation for him, and accoſts him in the character of a fallen angel. The whole paſſage is as follows, each part of which, I ſhall endeavour to explain as I go along. ver. 12. *Thus ſaith the Lord God — Thou ſealeſt up the ſum full of wiſdom, and perfect in beauty.* ver. 13. *Thou haſt been in* Eden *the garden of God.* — From this laſt expreſſion, Dr *Lowth* infers, that this whole firſt part of the paſſage alludes to *Adam*, when he was firſt created, and came pure out of the hands of his maker, and to that complete happineſs

which

which he enjoyed in paradiſe before his fall. It is neceſſary to examine this interpretation, before we proceed any farther, the whole ſtreſs of the matter reſting here.

ONE objection againſt it is, that it does not ſeem ſo natural, nor agreeable to the rules of good writing, that the prophet ſhould begin with one image, and then, abruptly dropping it, preſently change it for another, which he confeſſedly does in the next verſe; as it would be, if the ſame emblem were preſerved and continued through the whole paſſage. But beſides this, no part of the foregoing character, but one, ſeems at all to ſuit *Adam*. The firſt words, *Thou ſealeſt up the ſum full of wiſdom*, is not the character of one who had betrayed ſo much weakneſs as to miſcarry in the ſhameful manner *Adam* did; nor is the inſult that runs through the whole proper treatment of a poor creature that had not offended wilfully, but who had been ſeduced from his obedience, by the artful inſinuations of a diſguiſed enemy, much ſuperior to him in cunning and policy. This ſingle expreſſion — *Thou haſt been in* Eden *the garden of God*, is undoubtedly very applicable to *Adam*; tho' if it were meant

of

of him, I ſhould imagine it would have run not — *Thou haſt been* — but, Thou *waſt placed* in *Eden* — or in ſome ſuch words. But not to inſiſt on that, the following part of this verſe is as difficult to accommodate to him, as what went before — *every precious ſtone was thy covering*; *the ſardius, topaz*, &c. nine of which are there enumerated, and the LXX. reckon up twelve. The firſt covering that we read *Adam* ever had, was that of fig-leaves, nor had he this till after the fall, which is not the ſtate here alluded to; but as to any covering of gold or precious ſtones, it is what we have not the leaſt intimation of, and what ſeems not in any ſenſe to ſuit, or be reconcileable to either his primitive or fallen ſtate.

ENOUGH has been ſaid to ſhew that this deſcription is by no means applicable to *Adam*; let us then ſee, whether the ſame alluſion is not continued through the whole paſſage, and from firſt to laſt deſcriptive of Satan the prince of the fallen angels. To begin then again with ver. 12. *Thou ſealeſt up the ſum full of wiſdom, and perfect in beauty — Thou ſealeſt up the ſum* — This ſeems to be but an uncouth tranſlation of the original

and

and perhaps it is not very eaſy to find a better. But the idea convey'd by this expreſſion is notwithſtanding clear enough, — that this was a moſt accompliſhed perſonage, *full of wiſdom and perfect in beauty*, a deſcription that well ſuits the angelic nature, before it was debaſed by the fall.

VERSE 13. *Thou haſt been in* Eden, *the garden of God.* — Theſe words are plain, and clear of all doubt. They expreſsly declare that the perſon here ſpoken of had been in paradiſe. Now if it appear from the remaining characters of him, as well as from that already mention'd, that this perſon was the devil, I preſume it will not be queſtioned, but that his buſineſs there was to ſeduce our firſt parents from their duty, when he conveyed himſelf thither for that purpoſe under the form of a Serpent, as we know not of the devil's having been in *Eden* on any other occaſion, or in any other ſhape.

THE following part of this paſſage is capable of two interpretations ſomething different from, though not inconſiſtent with each other; ſome expreſſions in it rather favouring the one, which alludes to his original;

ginal; and ſome the other, which explains it of his fallen ſtate. I ſhall, therefore, endeavour to preſerve both as I go along.

THE next words are — *every precious ſtone was thy covering, &c.* This may be a metaphorical deſcription of that *perfect beauty* and *brightneſs*, mentioned ver. 12 — 17. with which the devil, as we muſt at preſent ſuppoſe him to be, was endowed, when an *Angel of Light*. Or, it may be, a pompous relation of that glittering luſtre in which he appeared to *Eve*, reſembling an Angel of Light; agreeably to the opinion of ſome divines, which it likewiſe greatly confirms, that angels aſſumed animal forms; and one ſort of them, that of flying fiery ſerpents, that is, ſhining like fire when they flew, as the moſt proper emblem of their own glorious and ſplendid forms; and that this was the form in which Satan appeared to *Eve*, the better to cover his deſign.

THE deſcription is continued — *The workmanſhip of thy tabrets and pipes* (rather *of* theſe *thy jewels and ornaments*, before mentioned) *was prepared in thee, in the day that thou waſt created.* This is the ſenſe, in

in which *Grotius* renders the words תפי and נקבי, and the *Targum* on *Jer.* xxxi. 4. and likewiſe the *Syriac* verſion of that place, favour this interpretation. The laſt words *in the day that thou waſt created*, ſeem to reſtrain the deſcription to his original ſtate. But to accommodate it to the other ſenſe, it may be obſerved that this prince of the fallen angels being *perfect in beauty*, ver. 12. and of ſuperior *brightneſs* to moſt of the angelic orders in his original ſtate, this occaſioned *his heart to be lifted up*, ver. 17. and proved his ruin; and when he made the attempt on *Eve*, in order to ſtrike her eyes the more, he reſumed, and put on, as far as he could, his original aſpect, in which he had ſo much prided himſelf. In this ſenſe the words are a ſtrong irony, as they give ſuch a pompous deſcription of what was, indeed, but counterfeit beauty.

VERSE 14. *Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth.* This is not very intelligible. It may be rendered, with reference to his firſt eſtate — *Thou* waſt *an anointed, i. e.* a holy *cherub* הסוכך, *that* didſt *cover* or bedeck *thyſelf* with precious ſtones, agreeably to what is ſaid above, *every precious ſtone* was *thy co-*

vering, מסכתך, to adorn thy ſelf withal. ונתתיך, and I *gave* them *thee*, *i. e.* theſe ornaments — endowed thee with that ſplendor and beauty of which theſe are deſcriptive.

BUT with regard to his degraded condition, and his appearance to *Eve* in paradiſe — את כרוב ממשח may be tranſlated — *Thou art the* painted *cherub* — Thus *Jer.* xxii. 14. משוח בששר is *painted with vermilion*. *Thou art the painted cherub that covereſt*. *i. e.* diſguiſeſt *thyſelf* with the abovementioned precious ſtones to conceal the deformity of thy fallen ſtate. To proceed — *Thou waſt upon the holy mountain of God*, *i. e.* in the holieſt and higheſt heavens, or in paradiſe, a place of holineſs, which was typical of the bleſſed manſions above. *Thou haſt walked up and down in the midſt of the ſtones of fire.* The verb is in the reciprocal conjugation, and may be conceived very aptly, to expreſs a kind of proud ſtrut, as we ſometimes ſpeak; or elſe, that undulating, or fluttering and fawning motion, into which it may be ſuppoſed the ſerpent put himſelf in his approaches to *Eve*, being at the ſame time bedecked with *ſtones* ſhining like fire, *i. e.* making a glittering appearance reſembling the

the precious ſtones ſo often already taken notice of.

VERSE 15. *Thou waſt perfect in thy ways till iniquity was found in thee.* This needs no comment, nor the next.

VERSE 16. By the multitude of thy * *falſe-dealings, and* ver. 18. *of thine iniquities, and by the iniquity of thy traffic, thou haſt ſinned: therefore I will caſt thee as prophane out of the Mountain of God, and I will deſtroy thee, O covering, i. e.* bedecked or diſguiſed *cherub, from the midſt of the ſtones of fire, i. e.* of thy bright ſhining ſtones. Obſerve here, that to give him the title of *covering cherub* in a good ſenſe, as it is generally underſtood,

* So I chuſe to render רכלתך, whereby is preſerved its affinity, both with רוכל a merchant, and with רכיל a falſe accuſer, or deceitful perſon, according to the Chaldee paraphraſe, all the antient verſions, and *Pagninus* likewiſe of *Jer.* ix. 4. and the *vulgate* of *Prov.* xi. 13. and chap. xx. 19. And as I cannot find that this word occurs any where elſe in ſcripture, but in this chap. of *Ezekiel*, it may as well be the abſtract of the one as the other of the above concrete nouns.

This rendering does not only better carry on the alluſion to the apoſtate angel, who in ſcripture has the character of a *falſe accuſer*, and an *accuſer of the brethren*; but it is likewiſe more agreeable to the context, which ſuppoſes the merchandiſe carried on to be diſhoneſt, by its being attended with violence, and cauſing to ſin, which honeſt merchandiſe, tho' ever ſo extenſive, doth not. ver. 18. *iniquity of traffic* is mentioned in expreſs terms.

and at the ſame time, to threaten him with deſtruction does not ſeem very conſiſtent.

VERSE 17. *Thine heart was lifted up becauſe of thy beauty, thou haſt corrupted thy wiſdom, by reaſon of thy brightneſs* — This we are elſewhere given to underſtand, was the caſe of the devil, to be lifted up with pride. So St *Paul*, in his deſcription of a biſhop, ſays, that *he muſt not be a novice, leſt being lifted up with pride, he fall into the condemnation of the devil*, 1 *Tim.* iii. 6. — *I will caſt thee to the ground.*

VERSE 18. *I will bring forth a fire from the midſt of thee, it ſhall devour thee, and I will bring thee to aſhes on the earth.* Theſe words, *I will caſt thee to the ground* — and *bring thee to aſhes on the earth*, perhaps alluding to the ſentence on the ſerpent — *On thy belly ſhalt thou go, and duſt ſhalt thou eat* — As this deſtruction, by fire, may refer to the nature of his puniſhment in hell.

IT is now ſubmitted, whether this be not the moſt natural interpretation of this, otherwiſe obſcure paſſage, and whether it does not furniſh an additional proof, that the

devil

devil was concern'd in the ſeduction of our parent EVE. He is plainly deſcribed throughout this whole paſſage; and he is particularly and expreſly ſaid to have been in *Eden the garden of God*, on this buſineſs, as it muſt be ſuppoſed, ſince we know not of any other he had there.

IT is never expected that compariſons and alluſions ſhould hold good in every particular. I deſire this interpretation of the alluſions in the foregoing paſſage, to be received no longer than till another appears that will ſet them in a better light. When any ſuch offers, I ſhall readily give up this for it.

I SHALL here ſubjoin a teſtimony or two more of the truth and reality of the fall out of the *Old Teſtament*. That eminent prelate, who has thrown ſo much light on this ſubject, has pointed out ſeveral alluſions in the book of *Job* to the fall of our firſt parents: in confirmation of which, I ſhall here only obſerve in general what I have elſewhere particularly proved, * that the main argu-

* In a diſſertation on the deſign and argumentation of the book of *Job*.

ment and deſign of the whole book of *Job*, is built upon the ſuppoſition of the fall — that *Job* himſelf was a repreſentative or type of *Adam*, or rather of mankind in general — that his firſt happy ſtate was an emblem of the firſt ſtate of man — that both the one and the other were deprived of their happineſs by ſatan — and that the deplorable condition, to which *Job* was reduced by him, fitly enough repreſents the miſerable ſtate into which he had brought fallen man; as his cure and reſtoration repreſents that of human nature thro' the Redeemer.

THE prophet *Hoſea*, (according to the *Hebrew*, which the *vulgate*, and the marginal tranſlation of our *Engliſh* Bibles have adhered to) plainly ſuppoſes *Adam* to have been under a covenant, and to have tranſgreſſed it, when he ſays — *They, like* Adam, *have tranſgreſſed the covenant*, chap. vi. 7. than which nothing can be more expreſs.

THERE are ſome more inſtances of the ſenſe of the antient *Jewiſh* church, concerning this matter, which ſhould be allowed their weight, though they deſcend near as low

low as the time of our Saviour, and ſome of them, as is ſuppoſed lower.

2 ESDRAS vii. 11, 12. mention is made of *Adam*'s tranſgreſſion and the conſequences of it. *When* Adam *tranſgreſſed my ſtatutes*, ſays God, *then was decreed that now is done. Then were the entrances of this world made narrow, full of ſorrow and travel: they are but few and evil, full of perils, and very painful.* Whereas *the entrances of the elder world*, as this author expreſſes himſelf, that is of the paradiſiacal ſtate, *were wide and ſure, and brought immortal life*, ver. 13. and ver. 46. the atheiſtical objection is made, which has been often ſince in the mouths of unbelievers, and has been in ſubſtance urged by Dr *M.* againſt the hiſtorical account — *This is my firſt and laſt ſaying, that it had been better not to have given the earth unto* Adam: *or elſe, when it was given him, to have reſtrained him from ſinning.* Then follows, ver. 48. *O thou* Adam, *what haſt thou done? for tho' it was thou that ſinned, thou art not fallen alone, but we all that come of thee.* The loſs of immortality and paradiſe, and all the hopes of that happy ſtate, of which mankind had been diſappointed by the fall, is lamented throughout the ten following verſes.

THIS

THIS were very good authority, if it could be ſuppoſed that this book was written at the time, it ſets forth chap. vii. 28. *viz.* four hundred years before Chriſt; but whenever, or by whomſoever written, it is not without its weight, in the preſent caſe, tho' the book be otherwiſe of no great account.

THE *Targum*, aſcribed to *Jonathan B. Uziel*, and that of *Jeruſalem*, have each of them a gloſs to this purpoſe, on *Gen.* iii. 15.— "That the ſeed of the woman, by keeping "the law, ſhall bruiſe the ſerpent's head, "and that the ſerpent ſhall bite their heel, "when they ſhall forſake the law — But "that there will be a remedy for them, "but none for him, and that they ſhall ap- "ply this remedy in the days of the king "*Meſſiah*."

THE *Targum* of *Jonathan* on *Ruth* iv. *ult.* is to this effect. "In *Jeſſe* iniquity and "corruption was not found, that he ſhould "be delivered into the hands of the an- "gel of death — wherefore he lived many "days, till the counſel which the ſerpent "gave *Eve*, to eat of the fruit of that tree,

"which

" which rendered men wiſe, to diſtinguiſh " good and evil, was brought to remem- " brance before God; thro' which advice " it was, that all the inhabitants of the earth " became obnoxious to death, and for this " offence the righteous *Jeſſe* died."

THE ſame *Targum* on *Eccleſ.* vii. *ult.* delivers the ſame doctrine. " God made the " firſt man upright and innocent before him; " but the ſerpent and *Eve* ſeduced him " to eat of the fruit of that tree, whereof " they that eat, obtain the faculty of diſtin- " guiſhing between good and evil, and thus " they cauſed death to invade him, and all " the inhabitants of the earth."

To the teſtimony of the antient *Jews*, about the time of Chriſt, I beg leave to add one heathen atteſtation of the ſame age, which was originally borrowed from the *Jews*. I mean that of *Virgil*, in his famous 4th eclogue, in which he inſerted whatever he found in the *Cumæan Sibyl*'s books, concerning the reſtoration of the golden age, which was none other than the paradiſiacal ſtate. And among the other good fruits of it, it is remarkable that he particularly mentions

tions the deſtruction of the ſerpent —— *Occidet et ſerpens, et fallax herba veneni occidet.* ——

THIS being mentioned in the ſingular number, and conſidering whence *Virgil* had his information, may be moſt properly underſtood of the deſtruction of that old ſerpent, *the devil and ſatan, which was to be bound and caſt into the lake of fire and brimſtone.* But however he came by his information, this is not more extraordinary than ſeveral other paſſages in that wonderful poem.

LET us now ſee what the chriſtian oracles deliver concerning this ſubject. Now though the whole goſpel diſpenſation, as was obſerved above, is built upon the reality of the fall, and this is generally allowed by unbelievers to be the chriſtian ſenſe of it; yet as a chriſtian divine has laboured to overthrow it, and to make it all fable and allegory, and has endeavoured to ſtrengthen his opinion with the authority of St *James* p. 134. which would have been as much for his purpoſe, if he had produced it, to prove the forgery of the miracles of the firſt ages of the church; I ſhall add a few plain teſtimonies

timonies out of the *New Teſtament*, in confirmation of this great truth.

ST *Paul* mentions *Adam*'s offence as what had brought ſin, death, and judgment into the world, wherein all his poſterity were involved with him, *Rom.* v. 12. and runs the contraſt between the effects of *Adam*'s tranſgreſſion, and the obedience and grace of Chriſt to the end of the chapter.

Now could a mere fable, apologue, allegory, call it what you will, cooked up near 3000 years, according to our author's chronology, after the ſuppoſed event — could ſuch a thing, at any time, be productive of ſuch real, too real and important conſequences? Are moral apologues ſuch dangerous deſtructive things? Or, muſt not ſuch dreadful cataſtrophe's have a foundation in fact? The ſame apoſtle tells us, 1 *Cor.* xv. 21. that *by man came death*; and by what man is explained in the next verſe — *in* Adam *all die*. How are we to underſtand this? What, that we do not die a natural, but only an allegorical death? The firſt and laſt *Adam* are here, and elſewhere, mentioned together, and compared with each other; but if the

the one be not a *real* perſon, the ſame ſuppoſition may be extended to the other: if the one be not a *living ſoul*, the other may as well be ſuppoſed not to be a *quickening ſpirit*, ver. 47. The bare mention of theſe conſiderations is ſufficient to expoſe the abſurdity of this ſuppoſition. Again, 2 *Cor.* xi. 3. the apoſtle takes notice of the ſerpent's *beguiling* Eve *by his ſubtilty* — and 1 *Tim.* ii. 14. that *Adam was not deceived* (by him) but that *the woman being deceived was* (firſt and chiefeſt) *in the tranſgreſſion.* But the apoſtle was deceived, and not ſhe, and we are greatly deceived, likewiſe, if this, after all, be found to be no more than fable. Either, therefore, let this be allowed to be fact, or let the whole ſcripture be plainly declared to be fable along with it.

THAT the devil was the real tempter of our parent *Eve*, I think may be very clearly inferred from the following texts. *He that committeth ſin is of the devil, for the devil ſinneth from the beginning*, ſays St *John*, 1 *Epiſt.* iii. 8. And in his goſpel, he ſpecifies what thoſe ſins were, of which the devil was particularly guilty; where he tells us, that the *devil was a murtherer from the beginning*,

ginning, and abode not in the truth, becauſe there is no truth in him — and that he is a liar and the father of it, Jo. viii. 44. Now whom do we read of his having murthered? and in what ſenſe was he a murtherer from the beginning, but in this, a moſt proper one — that he wilfully and maliciouſly contrived and compaſſed the death of our firſt parents, and adminiſtered the deadly poiſon to them, the fatal effects of which, are derived to their poſterity to this day; whereby he becomes juſtly chargeable with the guilt of their deaths, and that of their whole race ever ſince?

IT is no leſs plain, how the Devil came to merit that other character of a *lyar*, and *father of lyes*, which our Saviour gives him in this text likewiſe. For by a moſt notorious and impudent lye it was that he deluded our firſt parents to eat of the forbidden fruit: *Ye ſhall not ſurely die*, were his words in direct contradiction to what God had threatened—*thou ſhalt ſurely die*. Here was, indeed, a complication of lyes; for ſome reckon no leſs than four in the whole number. Be that as it will, he is from hence juſtly ſtiled a lyar; and as this was

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the firſt inſtance of the kind in the world, he is no leſs properly called *the father of lyes*. But if the devil was not at all concerned in this affair, then the natural ſerpent is the ſinner, murderer, lyar, and father of lyes. Or if this be no hiſtorical narration of facts, it lies upon thoſe who maintain that opinion to ſhew how the characters in theſe texts do properly belong to the devil.

HEB. ii. 14. we are told, that our Saviour *thro' death deſtroyed him that had the power of death, that is the devil.* Hence it appears that the devil is inveſted with the power of death; but the queſtion is how he came by it? When, and upon what occaſion was this power convey'd to him? We ſay the grant is contain'd in theſe words—*thou ſhalt bruiſe his heel*—and let thoſe that will not allow it produce better evidence of it.

HE having brought death into the world as the wages of ſin, was made the executioner of it, and in that ſenſe had the power of inflicting it; as was the conſtant belief of the *Jews*, in whoſe language he is on this account call'd, *the angel of death.* In virtue of this power it was that he put our Saviour to death

death in the fleſh, recognized by him in theſe words—*this is your hour and the power of darkneſs. Luke* xxii. 53. And thus was the prophecy contain'd in God's ſentence on the ſerpent, fulfill'd in and by our Saviour in a more eminent manner than it could be by any other Perſon. As he was the *ſeed of the woman* in ſuch a ſenſe as no one elſe ever was, ſo his death and ſpeedy reſurrection anſwer the idea of a ſlight wound convey'd by the terms, *bruiſing his heel*, in a peculiar manner likewiſe. And on the other hand, our Saviour's triumph over him by this very means, and the final deſtruction of his kingdom, was in effect the *bruiſing of his head*, thus *thro' his death deſtroying him that had the power of death*.

I ſhall only obſerve farther here, that from comparing theſe ſeveral laſt cited texts together, we may perceive the wiſdom of the divine appointment of the devil, to carry on the ends of God's juſtice in the puniſhment of man for his offence, at the ſame time that he was under ſentence of condemnation for his own. He was a *murderer from the beginning*, and was accordingly arraign'd to ſuffer the law in that caſe—his *head was to*

be bruiſed, implying death—ſuch a death as ſpirits are capable of. But as this death doth not deprive him of Being, and as the full execution of his ſentence hath not yet taken place—he in the mean time, as part of his ſentence, is degraded to the moſt diſgraceful office of executing the ſame ſentence of death on ſinful man, or, in other words, to *bruiſe his heel*; as offenders and ſometimes accomplices, are by human judicatories appointed executioners of the law upon other criminals. Add to this, that ſatan is call'd the *accuſer of the brethren*, Rev. xii. 10. upon which account likewiſe the office of executioner belong'd to him. For, as Mr *Daubuz* on the place obſerves, the accuſer, according to the cuſtom of the eaſtern nations, and in ſome caſes by the law of Moſes, Deut. xiii. 9. was appointed to be the executioner.

THERE is one paſſage more in St *Paul*, which it is proper here to take notice of, in order to juſtify the application made above, and by chriſtian writers in general, of the *ſeed of the woman*, to our Saviour Chriſt, a general expreſſion to a particular Perſon. *To Abraham and his ſeed were the promiſes made:*

made: He ſaith not, and to ſeeds as of many, but as of one; and to thy ſeed, that is Chriſt. Gal. iii. 16. Which reaſoning is as concluſive in the one caſe as the other. If the *ſeed of Abraham*, in the place referr'd to, ſignifies a ſingle perſon, the *ſeed of the woman* may, without excluding other ſenſes of it, be interpreted of a ſingle perſon likewiſe. The perſon meant by *Abraham*'s ſeed is by St. *Paul* determined to be Chriſt. Chriſt likewiſe was deſcended from *Eve* thro' the loyns of *Abraham*, and he alone was properly and literally the *ſeed of the woman*, being born of a pure virgin without the concurrence of man. A modern chriſtian divine could ſee nothing remarkable in this form of ſpeech, which we have been conſidering. A learned *Jew* of the twelfth century * was greatly ſtruck with it, and juſtly wonders how the ſeed of the woman only, and not that of the man came to be mention'd. The antient *Jews* would have taught both the one and the other, that it was not without reaſon that this expreſſion was uſed, and who the perſon is that is meant by it. *See* the *Targums* above cited on the place.

* Maimonides More Nevochim, P. ii. cap. 30.

THE reſtriction to a particular perſon, is greatly countenanced by the text itſelf. *It*, or rather as it is in the margin of ſome of our Bibles, *He* הוּא *ſhall bruiſe thy head*, &c. Here it has been well obſerved that the oppoſition is not made between the ſeed of the woman, and the ſeed of the ſerpent, as in the former part of the verſe; but between the ſeed of the woman, and the ſerpent himſelf, which points at a ſingle combat, as it were, between them. But where do we read that our Saviour had any conteſt with literal ſerpents, much leſs with that old individual literal ſerpent which beguil'd *Eve?* Which we cannot ſuppoſe to have been reſerved alive ſo long, till he appear'd to deſtroy him. It muſt therefore be that old metaphorical ſerpent with whom he had this engagement. the devil and ſatan, ὁ πλανῶν τὴν οἰκουμένην ὅλην Apocal. xii. 9. *Who is the deceiver of the whole world*, and therefore incluſively of our firſt parents. It is farther obſervable from this paſſage, that this ſame enemy is v. xiii. expreſsly ſaid to have *perſecuted the* WOMAN *which brought forth the* MAN-*child*, and v. 17. to *have made war with the remnant of her* SEED. Now tho' the woman here be the myſtical woman,

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the Church, and her ſeed the members of it; yet theſe expreſſions do not only carry a manifeſt alluſion to the natural woman *Eve*, and her natural ſeed; but the one is literally included in the other; for as the church and its members could conſiſt of none other than the *ſeed of the woman*, ſo Mr *Mede* expounds the *ſeed of the woman* to be Chriſt and his members. *See* his works vol. I. p. 298.

OBJECTIONS *anſwered.*

HAVING given theſe direct proofs of the hiſtorical ſenſe of the fall, I proceed now to examine ſuch objections againſt it, as have not already fallen under conſideration.

AND, in the firſt place, to conſider the foundation on which the objections in general are built. I find it is aſſerted with much confidence, that "allowing *Moſes* to have "been commiſſioned by God to write the "account of the paradiſiacal ſtate and fall "of man, yet that the matter of the ſtory, "whether inſpired or not, is abſolutely in-

"consistent with the character of an histo-
"rical narration; and must ever convince
"all who consider it without prejudice,
"that it is wholly fabulous or allegorical,"
Exam. of Bp. *Lond.* discourses, p. 135.—
"And that the historical sense of the fall,
"was so far from being the sense of the
"writer, or in any degree probable, that
"it is utterly absurd and contradictory to
"reason." *Ib.* p. 102. In support of this opinion, it is taken for granted as an allowed principle, "that man came perfect out of
"the hands of his Creator, and had a
"natural law implanted in him, which was
"a complete guide to him in his duty." *Ib.* Notwithstanding it is observed that "in
"this (supposed) historical narration, we
"cannot discover the least trace of any
"natural law or religion—that reason and
"nature appear to have had no rule in the
"paradisiacal state," and several occurrences in the narration are remark'd upon as having no foundation therein, but as contradictory thereto. p. 104. and *seqq.*

THIS is the general foundation upon which all the objections that follow are raised, which it will therefore be proper to examine,

examine, before we proceed to consider the particulars built upon it.

WHEN men talk of the perfection in which man was created, and of that natural law then implanted in him, they ought to consider what kind of perfection that could be.

AND as nature and reason are the only guides which the *reasoners of this world* are willing to follow, let us join issue with them, and consider what possible perfection man at his first awaking into life and being could be supposed endowed with, even allowing him to be created with the most enlarged capacities, and the most excellent and noble faculties that we can form any conception of. And I appeal to every impartial considerer, whether this could be a perfection of *accomplishment*; or whether it be not most natural to suppose that it was a perfection of *capacity* only. If the great Creator in the formation of the first man, observed in any measure that analogy which has appear'd in his works ever since; we cannot suppose that his mind open'd all at once; or that his reasoning powers, however excellent, could arrive at any degree of *accom-*

pliſh'd perfection, otherwiſe than by exerciſe and application; or that any of his faculties could be of any uſe to him, or ſervice in life, otherwiſe than as they were brought forth, exerted and improved by experience. "If we ſuppoſe a perſon brought "into the world with both theſe, (*viz.* underſtanding and bodily ſtrength) in maturity, as far as this is conceivable, he "would plainly at firſt be as unqualified "for the human life of mature age, as an "ideot. He would be in a manner diſtracted "with aſtoniſhment and apprehenſion, and "curioſity and ſuſpence; nor can one gueſs "how long it would be before he would "be familiarized to himſelf, and the "objects about him, enough even to ſet "himſelf to any thing. It may be queſtion'd "too, whether the natural information of "his ſight and hearing, would be of any "uſe to him in acting before experience." Bp. *Butler*'s analogy of religion and nature. p. 86.

Now if this deſcription bears any reſemblance to the ſtate of the firſt man at his creation, what idea can we have of that boaſted natural law, which was to do every thing

thing for him? That was to be such an all-sufficient instructor, and infallible guide to him? Do we now really wonder that *Moses* takes no notice of this law, in his historical account of the first state of man? Or do we not rather see that he neither ought, nor indeed could take any notice of it? For this good reason, *viz.* that there was at that time in fact, no such thing as any natural law or religion—at best, none that was worth the taking notice of—that it could not rise any higher than man's other accomplishments, and therefore it must for some time be very inconsiderable at the best, and very inadequate to the purposes of it.

BUT if it be consider'd farther, that the object of religion is very different from those of sense, and that it is conversant about matters of a superior nature to the things of this world, it is difficult to say in what length of time, or whether ever it could of itself, and by the mere strength of human reason, be discover'd and improved to such a degree, as to be an adequate rule of life.

EVEN in this its present supposed state of perfection, notwithstanding the improve-

ments

ments it has moſt unthankfully received from revelation, its ſtouteſt champions have not as yet been able to prove it to be a ſufficient guide in matters of religion. And can we ſuppoſe it to have been a better guide, or near ſo good a one in its infant ſtate? The Biſhop has ſhewn, even on the ſuppoſition of its utmoſt perfection, where it muſt have been defective; * but my buſineſs is only to account for *Moſes*'s ſilence concerning it, which I preſume is done in ſuch a manner, that this omiſſion which was triumph'd in as a mighty objection againſt it, proves to be a good argument for the truth and reality of the hiſtory.

THE religion of the firſt man was reveal'd, as is acknowledged when it is ſaid, that all things in the paradiſiacal ſtate were order'd miraculouſly and ſupernaturally by the immediate interpoſition of God, p. 104. When natural religion commenced we know not, nor in what age or country it obtain'd unborrow'd from, and independent of revelation, unleſs it were among the *Hottentots*, and ſome ſuch people who are ſo far degenerated, that we are told even the human

* In his third diſcourſe, and appendix likewiſe.

form

form is much debaſed in them, ſo as to be but a degree above brutes. We have no certain knowledge what its *Credenda* and *Agenda* were; nor do we know of any mighty efficacy or ſufficiency it had for the improvement and exaltation of the natures of thoſe who were guided by it alone. Its friends and admirers would do it acceptable ſervice, if they would publiſh the hiſtory of its riſe and progreſs in theſe reſpects, or produce ſome authentic records, or other evidence of its antiquity, worth, and excellence. Let them clearly aſſign its nature, extent, and limits—its ſeveral duties, promiſes, and ſanctions; and it will be time enough then to build arguments upon it.

BUT to argue from the preſent ſtate of nature and reaſon, to that of our firſt parents, is taking for granted, what I think ought not to be allowed.

THIS we know, that as God Almighty revealed himſelf to *Adam*, ſo he continued to do to holy men of old, from time to time, not truſting, it ſeems, to natural religion—that there has ſcarce been any nation on earth, where ſome traces of theſe revelations have

have not been diſcovered — that the main body of them hath been committed to writing, and is continued on record for the inſtruction, the guidance, and benefit of God's true ſervants throughout all ages — that it is, for the moſt part, fairly and openly ſubmitted to be conſidered, examined and canvaſſed by men — that where it undergoes the ſevereſt ſcrutiny, there I believe we may ſay it moſt prevails, notwithſtanding the utmoſt oppoſition that wit and malice can raiſe againſt it — that where it moſt prevails, there the moſt flouriſhing and happy ſocieties of men are found, as on the other hand, thoſe nations are the moſt ſavage and barbarous, who do not enjoy the light of it, and are left to the guidance of this natural law.

THERE being, therefore, ſo little foundation for the ſuppoſition of any natural law or religion, of any account, in the paradiſiacal ſtate, that being at preſent our only concern, all that is built upon it, is of as little weight.

IT is proper here juſt to obſerve, in order to prevent miſtakes, that what has been ſaid of

of natural religion, is not meant to diſcard reaſon, nor to deprive it of its proper uſe and privilege. Though it be but an indifferent *guide*, yet is it a ſufficient *teſt* of religion, and indeed the only one we have. Let us examine the hiſtorical narration by this criterion, and let it ſtand or fall by it.

FIRST, it is ſaid, "that had our firſt pa-"rents been left to the direction of the na-"tural law, it would have taught them that "the primary end of their creation was to "propagate their ſpecies," p. 104. How? Does this great expounder of the natural law, lay this down as the firſt end of man taught by it? I thought the primary end of his creation was to ſerve his Creator. If the natural law teach otherwiſe, I am ſure I ſhall have no great opinion of it; eſpecially if it teaches *that* to be his primary end, which brutes enjoy in common with him, and which is not even their primary end; nor can it, indeed, be properly called any end at all. It is, indeed, a *law* eſtabliſhed for both, in order to the preſervation of the ſpecies, but the preſervation of the individual is ſtill prior to it, both in us and them, in whatever view it be conſidered — and whether

whether it be called *end* or *law*. To proceed with the objection.

FROM this hiſtorical narration, our author finds, "that our firſt parents, during their "ſtate of innocence, were utterly ignorant "of this end." *ib.* But where does he find this? not in theſe words, *Be fruitful and multiply*, chap. i. nor from the inſtitution of marriage, and *Adam*'s reflection upon it, chap. ii. nor is there any thing hinders, for ought we know, but that they might have fulfilled the end of it. It has been conjectured that they actually did fulfil it, and that *Eve* was near ſeven months gone with child before they were turned out of paradiſe. (*See* Eſſay on Redemption, *chap.* i.)

BUT whether they really fulfilled this end, or not, it appears from the hiſtorical account, that they were expreſly commanded and authoriſed to do it by God himſelf; which, inſtead of depriving them of the direction of the natural law, was, indeed, aiding and enforcing it, and doing more than it could of itſelf do. It is ſtrange, therefore, to ſee it aſſerted, that during their ſtate of innocence, we *find* in the hiſtorical account they

they were utterly ignorant of this end; tho', if that were really the caſe, I do not ſee how it could much hurt the credit of it, any more than what is urged in the next place, *viz.* "That they did not know their "own nakedneſs, till they were expelled "paradiſe." He ſhould have ſaid, till their fall. However, all that can be inferred from hence is, that they were in a ſtate of great innocence and ſimplicity — that they knew neither the want, nor the uſe of cloaths, having never ſeen nor experienced any. Nakedneſs is a relative idea, which could not enter their minds, till occaſion happened to ſuggeſt its correlative. They knew not ſin, and therefore had no ſenſe of ſhame, which proceeds from it; any more than young children have when they are naked. But as ſoon as they tranſgreſſed, ſhame and confuſion, the natural offspring of an evil deed, overwhelmed them, ſhewed them their nakedneſs, and put them upon means to cover it. But ſee more to this purpoſe above.

NEXT it is ſaid "that the natural law "could not teach them that the fruit of a "tree could inſpire knowledge, or that the "knowledge of good or ill could be crimi-

"nal

" nal or hurtful." This objection has been ſufficiently obviated already; notwithſtanding, I will beſtow a few words more upon it to ſhew that this is not ſo repugnant to the principles of the natural law, or our natural notions, as the objector would have it.

As to the firſt part of the objection, all the force of it conſiſts in the archneſs of the inſinuation convey'd in the terms of it, implying a ſuppoſition of ſome *charm*, as has been obſerved before, in this tree above all others, by the uſe of which knowledge was to be inſpired. But there is no foundation in the text for any ſuch conſtruction, nor for ſuppoſing any natural virtue or efficacy in the tree itſelf for this purpoſe. Notwithſtanding which, this, as well as any thing elſe, may by divine inſtitution be made a means of knowledge, and may convey it by the poſitive appointment of him who hath all nature in his power, and can make what combinations he pleaſes between the ſeveral parts of it: And it has accordingly been ſhewn above how it was made to anſwer that end.

THE other part of the objection that is grounded on the abſurdity of the ſuppoſi-

tion,

tion, that the knowledge of good and evil ſhould be *criminal* or *hurtful*, ſeems to be of more weight, knowledge of any kind being ſo excellent and beneficial an accompliſhment, and ſo needful too, eſpecially in the infant-ſtate of the world, that it appears at firſt ſight, not very eaſy to reconcile the inhibition of it to our notions of an infinitely wiſe and beneficent Being.

BESIDES what has been ſaid above, to this point, let it be conſidered farther, that as noble a talent as this is, yet it may not be always proper for us to be entruſted with it, and that it may prove prejudicial to us: We are Beings of limited capacities, and therefore ſhould be content to exerciſe our faculties within the bounds of our own ſphere, and not aſpire to be wiſe above what is preſcribed us. *What is that to thee?* Was our Saviour's anſwer to the impertinent curioſity of one of his diſciples, and *it is not for you to know the times and the ſeaſons* — to them all. And this is no more than what is thought prudent and fitting in all ſtates and conditions of life. It is not for ſubjects always to know the ſecret ſprings, the grounds and the reaſons of the conduct,

the orders and commands of their governors, even in matters of near concern to themſelves; nor for children to be made as wiſe as their parents in every thing they want to be informed in. Knowledge, as excellent a talent as it is, may be too dearly bought, and there are things which we had much better be ignorant of than know. It is, therefore, not only prudent, but kind to check our curioſity, and lay it under a reſtraint in that reſpect. And if any branch of knowledge be thought fit by God to be reſtrained from us, it becomes *criminal*, and if *criminal*, *hurtful*, as has been ſhewn, in fact, to have been the caſe of our firſt parents.

GOD ALMIGHTY had planned out a ſtate of diſcipline for them, ſuited to the ſimplicity of theſe his new-made creatures; wherein they were not to be kept in a total and abſolute ignorance.—We learn nothing like that from the ſhort hiſtory we have of that ſtate. *Adam*'s giving names to the creatures, and his prophetical reflection on the marriage ſtate, are inſtances to the contrary. And they were to be leiſurely trained up in ſuch other kinds of knowledge, as were proper for their

their condition, light being gradually to be let in on the eyes of their underſtanding, as it ſhould open and unfold itſelf, and as they ſhould be able to bear it; which was much wiſer and kinder treatment of them, than to leave them expoſed, as the oſtrich doth her eggs, to be guided by, I know not what natural law. But they affecting to be wiſe *beyond their line*, or as one of their fathers expreſſes it, ὑπὲρ ἥλικίαν φρονεῖν, the tempter ſtruck in with their vanity—promiſed them wiſdom, but alaſs, how dearly bought! They eagerly took the alluring bait—and *their mouth was filled with gravel.*

IN the next place, it is ſaid, "that it was "not the light of reaſon, that directed our "firſt parents to hide themſelves from the "ſight of God among the trees." p. 104. But whatever it is that directs them to it, we find it the conſtant reſource of guilt in their ſons to flee from juſtice. One would think that the biſhop's remark, on this incident, might have precluded this objection. "All that we read of *Adam*, upon his tranſ-"greſſion, is, that conſcious of his guilt, he "hid himſelf from the preſence of the Lord "God among the trees of the garden, ho-

" ping (as there is nothing more irrational " than fear) to eſcape the All-ſeeing Eye of " his Maker." Appendix, p. 36. And that this was fact, we have the teſtimony of an inſpired writer, who plainly alludes to it in theſe words — *If I cover my trangreſſions like* Adam, *Job* xxxi. 33. Poſſibly they had not yet diſcovered for themſelves, it is certain their confuſion did not give them leave to reflect upon, the divine attribute of omniſcience.

I COME now to the capital of this group of objections, and the only one which I think remains unanſwered: and this is, that in the hiſtorical narration " we find one of " the loweſt of the beaſts (which ſhe might " have known to have been all dumb) hold- " ing diſcourſe, and debating with Eve, " without giving the leaſt ſhock or ſurpriſe " to her natural reaſon."

WITH regard to this, let it be conſidered that Eve was ſimple and unexperienced—had but juſt acquired the uſe of language, having been taught it probably by her huſband, as he was by God himſelf; all the advantage that man hath of the brute creation in this

this reſpect being a *capacity* and aptneſs to learn ſpeech, and not the *actual* poſſeſſion of it, which he hath not by nature any more than they.

BE it farther conſidered, that whatever knowledge Adam had of the nature of the creatures, it does not follow that EVE had the ſame; becauſe when God brought them to *Adam* to impoſe names upon them, ſhe was not preſent, having not as yet been preſented to him, though probably formed, notwithſtanding her formation is not particularly mentioned till afterwards. (*ſee Eſſay on Redemp.* p. 17.) All her knowledge, therefore, of the creatures was what Adam had communicated to her, improved perhaps ſome little, very little, by her own obſervation, as his knowledge of them had been communicated by God. Therefore, as ſhe had lately acquired the uſe of ſpeech herſelf, poſſibly, ſhe might not know that it was abſolutely unattainable by other creatures. Thus much, it may be preſumed, ſhe knew, that ſome of them had capacities ſuperior to others: *The Serpent* particularly *was more ſubtile than any* other *beaſt of the field.* This is obſerved by the Hiſtorian

not only to account for the ſucceſs of the temptation, which, though it be attributed to the ſerpent, could not be brought about by the mere ſubtilty of the brute itſelf, were it ever ſo great; but his principal view in introducing his relation with this remark, I am fully ſatisfied, was to account for the credit which the ſerpent had obtained with Eve from the opinion which ſhe had of his wiſdom and ſagacity; and I find this to be Mr. Mede's opinion likewiſe,*

THIS obviates a difficulty mentioned in the Biſhop's Appendix, p. 13. as urged againſt the literal ſenſe; which, as it ſuppoſes the ſerpent to be the inſtrument of an evil Being, by whoſe ſubtilty alone, and not that of the ſerpent, Eve was deceived; "to what "purpoſe, it is aſked, is the ſubtilty of the ſer-"pent at all mentioned in a caſe where it had "nothing to do?" To this the above conſideration furniſhes an anſwer—that the ſerpent's ſubtilty is mentioned to account for the influence he had on Eve. We ſeldom pay any regard to the advice of one, whom we don't think in ſome meaſure capable of

* Vol. 1. p. 181-189.

giving

giving it; and the tempter might have found it difficult to impoſe even upon her ſimplicity, if he had choſen a leſs plauſible cover for his fraud. Whence it appears that the ſubtilty even of the inſtrument contributed to the ſucceſs of the agent who made uſe of him in the deception.

ONE main end of God's bringing the creatures to Adam to be named by him, and to be acquainted with their natures (which he is allowed to have been, Exam. p. 105) was, that being known, he might likewiſe know which to entertain and employ, and which to avoid and be cautious of.

THAT the names which Adam gave the creatures were not arbitrary, but founded in nature and reaſon appears from hence, that when Eve was brought to him he gave her a name likewiſe, and added the reaſon of it — *ſhe ſhall be called woman, becauſe ſhe was taken out of man.* He likewiſe gave a reaſon for the name of Eve; and we meet with but few primitive names without the grounds of them annext. — An argument, by the way, that the Hebrew was the original language.

Now taking what has been ſaid along with us, when the ſerpent accoſted Eve in the manner it is related, we will not, I preſume, think her ſurprize at his having the uſe of ſpeech, ſo great, as at firſt ſight it might appear. To hear him expreſs himſelf in articulate ſounds, might at firſt very likely greatly excite her wonder; but when ſhe found it ſo in fact, what had ſhe to conclude, but that he had learnt the uſe of ſpeech as well as ſhe? And perhaps he might have attributed both his ſpeech and reaſon, of which ſhe found him ſuch a maſter, to the fruit of the tree of knowledge.* Her aſtoniſhment therefore muſt be turned into admiration of his wiſdom, eſpecially when ſhe heard him reaſon ſo agreeably to her own inclinations, which were already but too eagerly bent the ſame way. By too great an indulgence of her appetite in eating of the other fruits of the garden, it grew upon her to that degree, that at length ſhe conceived a longing for

* See an ingenious conjecture to this purpoſe in a note to the latter of Mr *Parker*'s two diſcourſes on the fall, which I had not the pleaſure of ſeeing till the foregoing ſheets were committed to the preſs,

this,

this, and was therefore eaſily induced to a compliance with what ſhe was already half-won to. (See *eſſay on redemption.* ch. i.)

WITH regard to the ſeeming abſurdity of this relation to us her poſterity, there is thus much farther to be ſaid—that weare at ſuch a diſtance, and in ſuch different circumſtances from thoſe of our parent *Eve*, that we are very incompetent judges of her ſtate, and the tranſactions of it; which, inſtead of rejecting every thing that does not go down with our ſqueamiſh reaſon, ſhould make us more modeſt and willing to take matters as they are repreſented — that this affair appears to us in quite a different view from what it did to her. She apprehended no other being to be preſent, but what appeared to her — We, if we had no other light into this matter but our reaſon, muſt conclude, as undoubtedly ſhe did afterwards, upon reflection on what had happened with its conſequences, that a mere ſerpent could not diſcourſe and reaſon as this is ſaid to have done, and that there was ſome other being that made uſe of its inſtrumentality.

MOREOVER,

MOREOVER, we have learnt from the hiſtories of the goſpel and acts of the apoſtles, that evil ſpirits had in thoſe times a power of entering the bodies of men, and not only influenced their ſpeech, but they are frequently repreſented to have ſpoken within them. And much of the ſame nature is the account which we have of ventriloquiſts in heathen authors. We have an inſtance in the goſpels of their entering the bodies of brutes, even a whole herd of ſwine; and if while they were in the ſwine, our Saviour had thought fit to command them to give their name, I ſee no reaſon to doubt their being able to anſwer *Legion*, and talk in them as well as they had done juſt before in the poor man poſſeſſed by them. And is it not as eaſy to conceive, that the devil might ſpeak out of the ſerpent, or make uſe of his organs for that purpoſe, which, for ought we know, might have been as well fitted for ſpeech as thoſe of an aſs? The ſpeaking of one brute facilitates our belief of ſpeech in the other. The reality of the one cannot be controverted by any who allow the authority and inſpiration of the ſcriptures either of *Old* or *New Teſta-*

ment,

ment, as we have the atteſtation of an apoſtle to confirm the report of the prophet, that *the dumb aſs ſpake with man's voice.* 2 *Pet.* 2. 16. Why, therefore, ſhould we doubt the reality of the other? It is true, God is ſaid to have *opened the mouth of the aſs*; but neither can we pretend to limit the power of other ſpirits in this reſpect. It is objected that *Eve* was not ſurprized at the ſpeech of the ſerpent; nor do we read that *Balaam* was at the ſpeech of his aſs; tho' in his time the nature and quality of brutes muſt be better underſtood, than they were by *Eve* in the infancy of the world, and he *muſt* have known that this was out of the common courſe of nature.

I SHALL venture to go one ſtep farther with regard to the nature of the ſerpent; it is not aſſerted upon juſt grounds that "he "was one of the loweſt of the beaſts." Becauſe he is ſo now, it does by no means follow that he was ſo when he tempted *Eve*, but on the ſuppoſition that he underwent no curſe, which is juſt the reverſe of that which we are to argue upon.

IF, therefore, we ſuppoſe him to have undergone a curſe, the only way we have left of judging of his original ſtate is by forming in our minds a contraſt of what he is at preſent. Inſtead therefore, of that abject, loathſome, hurtful reptile to which he is now degraded, he was probably an erect, beautiful, and engaging creature; nay, perhaps, as he was the moſt knowing, ſo in other reſpects the moſt excellent of the whole brute creation,* inſomuch, that it hath been obſerved by ſome divines † of great judgment, that *Eve* might have taken him for an holy angel; it being not improbably conjectured that angels appeared to our firſt parents in paradiſe under animal forms. The paſſage in *Ezekiel* above taken notice of, gives great countenance to this opinion, as does that of St *Paul*, which informs us that *Satan*, on occaſion, can *tranſform himſelf into an angel of light*. This ſingle ſuppoſition, if admitted, would ſoon ſolve the whole difficulty; but this, as well as what was obſerved before, muſt be left with the reader, who is to judge upon the

* See Mede, ib. p. 290. † Abp. *Teniſon* and Bp. *Patrick*.

whole

whole whether *Eve*'s converſation with the ſerpent be too ſhocking and abſurd for her to maintain, or us to believe.

THE objection which comes next in order, and the laſt of this collection, has already fallen under conſideration. p. 49. There are ſome more interſperſed in different parts of the work, few of which deſerve notice.

IT is objected p. 115, "that the ſentence "muſt have been pronounced upon a real "ſerpent, excluſively of any other agent, or "it could not poſſibly be juſt." But if there was another agent included under the form of the ſerpent, and who was principal in the crime, where is the injuſtice of including him in the ſentence? or, indeed, with what juſtice is his excluſion out of it pleaded for, and what reaſon is there for underſtanding the words in ſo reſtrained a ſenſe?

ON the other hand, the contrary interpretation is repreſented as "an hypotheſis "which aſſigns the whole puniſhment to "one being, yet charges the whole crime "to another." p. 162. But this is an hypotheſis of the writer's own framing. It is

is true, " the curſe denounced againſt this " ſerpent is adapted to the ſtate and condi- " tion of a natural ſerpent, and is *literally* " *applicable* to no other kind of being." * Theſe are the biſhop's own words, which he has mutilated in his quotation, having left out the words *literally applicable.* But does it follow from hence, that they are not applicable at all to any other Being; and is not this very application the main ſubject of the diſpute? But from the conceſſion, which the biſhop is repreſented to have made, this application is inſinuated to be given up by him, in order to reduce him to an abſurdity.

IT may with greater colour of reaſon be thought unjuſt, that any ſhare of the puniſhment or curſe ſhould fall upon the natural ſerpent, as he could be no more than an inſtrument in the crime, which is the moſt material part of the objection. But by that univerſal *law of connection,* † which binds and unites the ſeveral parts of the creation to each other, the curſe was extended to the reſt of the brutal kind, and the ſerpent being more intimately connected with the tempter,

* Bp's Appendix, p. 2. † See *Eſſay on Redemption* p. 33.

was

was only curſed *above* all other cattle. There are caſes in the law of *Moſes*, whereby the beaſt, that was perhaps no more acceſſary to an offence, than the ſerpent was to this, was ordered to be put to death, *Lev.* xx. 15, 16. And it might be neceſſary, thus, to degrade the ſerpent, to render him the leſs fit inſtrument for any ſuch future attempt of the deceiver, and to perpetuate him as a monument of God's juſt vengeance on ſin.

P. 130. The exiſtence of paradiſe is queſtioned and caviled at, becauſe its "ſitu-"ation has never been known to the world, "after the moſt diligent enquiry, to this "very day," and p. 133, it is repreſented as "a fanciful ſcene, *abounding* with fruits, "which had no exiſtence in nature, and "planted in a part of the eaſt, which no "geography could ever mark out upon "the face of this globe." But it is ſurely perverſe to demand an exact account of things whoſe exiſtence was of ſuch ſhort duration, and is ceaſed ſo long ſince. It is ſufficient to evince the reality of its exiſtence, to obſerve that the ſituation of Paradiſe is deſcribed by the Hiſtorian with ſuch accuracy, as perhaps is not to be paralleled elſe-

where

where — at the confluence of four great rivers, whoſe courſes are deſcribed, and an account given of the produce of the countries, thro' which ſome of them paſſed — that though by length of time, and the changes which this globe has undergone, the exact ſpot cannot now be aſcertained, yet that it is ſufficient to anſwer every religious purpoſe, and to ſatisfy all reaſonable enquiries, to know that it ſtood ſomewhere upon the *Euphrates* * — and with regard to the exiſtence of the fruits, which he ſays *abounded* in it, though there was but one tree of a kind, it does not ſurely follow, that becauſe theſe fruits are not now known to have any exiſtence in nature, they never did exiſt at all. It may much more reaſonably be demanded on the other hand, that before we give any account of theſe things, the nature and qualities of all other fruits ſhould be firſt accounted for, that now exiſt, or are ſuppoſed to have exiſted in nature; and that the geography of all places, mention'd by all later writers of credit, ſhould be firſt preciſely fixt, and it will be time enough then to anſwer the ſame queſ-

* Dr *Rutherforth* has conſidered this objection more largely, and given an ingenious ſolution of it.

tions,

tions, with regard to *Moſes*, when they will come in their proper order. But it were a vain attempt to undertake to ſatisfy all the cavils of unreaſonable men.

IN a letter to Dr *Waterland*, p. 19. aſcribed to this ſame author, he has dreſſed up an objection againſt the reality of the paradiſiacal ſtate, taken from the ſhort duration of it, which has received an anſwer from the ſcripture account of its future reſtoration.* The objections againſt the fall in that performance, may be reſolved into one or other of thoſe which have been urged anew in his *examination*, &c. and have been here conſidered, and which are all that I think to be any way conſiderable in themſelves.

THE author being now defunct, I hope I have been ſufficiently careful to avoid any indecent treatment of his memory; which I wiſh no worſe to, nor to him, than that his works may be ſoon extinct with him, but that they may not *follow him*, nor ever riſe up in judgment againſt him.

TO conclude, that there are difficulties in the only account we have of the moſt

* See *Eſſay on Redemption*, p. 193. 2d edit.

antient tranſactions in the world, is not at all to be wondered at, the contrary would rather be matter of wonder; and though it were not in our power to give a ſatisfactory ſolution of them all, yet the direct proofs of the truth and reality of the hiſtory, which have been here, and elſewhere, produced, are of themſelves ſufficient to eſtabliſh it, againſt any objections that have been, or, I conceive, can be raiſed againſt it; as well as to confirm the juſtneſs of an obſervation made long ago by the greateſt maſter of this argument — "that the *more*, and the *oftner* "this caſe is conſidered in all its circumſtan- "ces, the more will the commonly received "interpretation prevail*."

LET GOD BE TRUE, AND EVERY MAN A LYAR.

* Bp. of *Lond. Uſe and Intent of Prophecy*, diſc. 3d.

FINIS.

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